Committee for Education

Report on the Inquiry into Shared and Integrated Education
Volume 2

Together with the Minutes of Proceedings, Minutes of Evidence and Written Submissions Relating to the Report

Ordered by the Committee for Education to be printed 1 July 2015

Powers and Membership

Powers

The Committee for Education is a Statutory Departmental Committee of the Northern Ireland Assembly established in accordance with paragraphs 8 and 9 of the Belfast Agreement, section 29 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 and under Standing Order 48 of the Northern Ireland Assembly.

The Committee has power to:

- Consider and advise on Departmental budgets and annual plans in the context of the overall budget allocation;

- Consider relevant secondary legislation and take the Committee stage of primary legislation;

- Call for persons and papers;

- Initiate inquires and make reports; and

- Consider and advise on any matters brought to the Committee by the Minister of Education.

Membership

The Committee has 11 members including a Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson and a quorum of 5. The membership of the Committee is as follows:

Peter Weir (Chairperson) [2,6]
Sandra Overend (Deputy Chairperson) [7]
Maeve McLaughlin
Jonathan Craig
Ross Hussey [1,8]
Nelson McCausland [3]
Chris Hazzard
Trevor Lunn
Robin Newton
Pat Sheehan
Sean Rogers [4, 5]

[1]   With effect from 04 July 2014 Mrs Sandra Overend replaced Mrs Jo-Anne Dobson
[2]   With effect from 23 September 2014 Ms Michelle McIlveen replaced Mr Mervyn Storey as Chairperson
[3]   With effect from 06 October 2014 Mr Nelson McCausland replaced Mr Stephen Moutray
[4]   With effect from 17 November 2014 Mr Colum Eastwood replaced Mr Seán Rogers
[5]   With effect from 08 December 2014 Mr Sean Rogers replaced Mr Colum Eastwood
[6]   With effect from 11 May 2015 Mr Peter Weir replaced Miss Michelle McIlveen as Chairperson
[7]   With effect from 15 June 2015 Mrs Sandra Overend replaced Mr Danny Kinahan as Deputy Chairperson
[8]   With effect from 23 June 2015 Mr Ross Hussey replaced Mrs Sandra Overend

Table of Contents

Northern Ireland
Assembly

Appendix 3

Written Submissions

Contents

- Atlantic Philanthropies and International Fund Ireland (Joint Submission)
- Ballycastle High School and Cross and Passion College
- Ballymena Borough Council
- Ballymoney Community Resource Centre
- Beacon, P – Concerned Parent
- BELB
- Blackwater Integrated College
- Bridge Integrated Primary School
- Bullick, E – Retired Teacher
- Carr, A – Concerned Parent
- Carrickfergus College
- CCMS
- Ceara Special School
- CnaG
- Committee for Employment and Learning
- Committee for the Office of the First and Deputy First Minister
- Community Relations Council
- Concerned Parent
- Corrymeela Community
- Cranmore Integrated Primary School
- Department for Employment and Learning
- Drumlin Integrated Primary School
- Drumragh Integrated College – Student Council
- Drumragh Integrated College
- Duneane and Moneynick Primary Schools
- Early Years
- Educate Together
- Equality Commission for Northern Ireland
- Equality Commission for Northern Ireland (2)
- Fermanagh Trust
- Forge Integrated Primary School
- Fort Hill Integrated Primary School and Nursery Unit
- General Teaching Council for Northern Ireland
- Hart Memorial Primary School and Presentation Primary School
- Hazelwood Integrated College
- Hazelwood Integrated Primary School –Board of Governors
- Hazelwood Integrated Primary School
- Integrated Education Alumni Association
- Integrated Education Fund
- International Fund for Ireland
- Kilbride Central Primary School

- Knox and Borooah 1
- Knox and Borooah 2
- Labour Party Northern Ireland
- Lagan College
- Limavady Grammar School
- Lismore Comprehensive School
- Loughview Integrated Primary and Nursery School
- Macada- Moy Area Community and Development Association
- McEvoy, P.
- Methodist College Belfast
- Mill Strand Integrated Primary School and Nursery Unit
- Millennium Integrated Primary School
- Moy Area Playgroup, Moy Regional Primary School and St. John's Primary School
- NASUWT
- NEELB
- NI Commission for Catholic Education (NICCE)
- NI Committee of the Association for Science Education (ASE)
- NICCY – Oral Evidence
- NICCY
- NI Human Rights Commission
- NIPSA
- Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education
- Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education (2)
- Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education (3)
  (Additional Papers from Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education can be found at: http://viewer.irishnews.com/fsi/viewer/fsi.swf?&cfg=pages_presets/catalog_links&pages_dir=images%2Fsupplements%2Fintegrated%2F2014)
- Northern Ireland Youth Forum – Champions 4 Change
- NUS-USI
- Oakgrove Integrated College
- Odling-Smee, A
- O'Reilly, N
- Parenting NI 1
- Parenting NI 2
- Parenting NI 3
- Phoenix Integrated Primary School
- PlayBoard Northern Ireland
- Portaferry Integrated Primary School
- Professor Austin UU - Shared and Integrated Education Update on ePartners
- Professor Austin UU
- Professor Brandon Hamber
- Professor Hughes QUB Centre for Shared Education
- PTA Northern Ireland
- Rowendale Integrated Primary School

- Rural Community Network
- Seaview Enterprises Ltd
- SEELB
- SELB
- Shauna Mulligan (an integrated education alumnus)
- Shimna Integrated College Specialist School
- Sir Bob Salisbury
- Speedwell Trust
- Sperrin Integrated College
- Spires Integrated Primary School
- Spires Integrated Primary School – Board of Governors
- St Marys Limavady
- St Martins PS Garrison
- St Paul's, Bessbrook and Newtownhamilton High School
- Steiner Waldorf School Fellowship
- Stranmillis University College
- The Aspect Group of Prospect
- The Association of School and College Leaders
- Tor Bank School
- Transferor Representatives Council (TRC)
- Ulster Teachers' Union
- UNESCO – Professor Alan Smith
- Western Education and Library Board (1)
- Western Education and Library Board (2)
- Western Education and Library Board (3)
- Youth Council Northern Ireland

Atlantic Philanthropies and International Fund for Ireland

Northern Ireland Assembly – Committee for Education Shared and Integrated Education Inquiry

Submission by Atlantic Philanthropies and the International Fund for Ireland

Contacts

Dr Padraic Quirk (Atlantic Philanthropies)
Dr Adrian Johnston (International Fund for Ireland)

23rd October 2014

1. Introduction and background

1.1 This submission to the Northern Ireland Education Committee Inquiry into Shared and Integrated Education is made by the International Fund for Ireland and Atlantic Philanthropies, two organisations which have been jointly supporting shared education since 2007 onwards. We welcome the opportunity to submit written evidence to the timely inquiry on shared and integrated education.

1.2 Although the details of this submission focus on our collective experience of funding the Shared Education Programme, it is worth noting that Atlantic Philanthropies has supported initiatives in shared and integrated education and view both as positively contributing to transforming a divided education system.

1.3 Our submission follows the key headings set out in terms of reference by the Education Committee: nature and definition of shared and integrated education; key barriers and enablers; alternative approaches and models in other jurisdictions; and, priorities and actions to improve sharing and integration. Of necessity, the emphasis in our submission is based on our collective intervention on shared education drawing on the experience and research evidence generated therein.

2. Definitions

2.1 What is integrated education? Integrated education brings together in one school, children, parents, teachers and governors from Catholic and Protestant traditions and those from other faiths or none. Pupils experience an education that gives them the opportunity to understand, respect and celebrate all cultural and religious traditions. Parental involvement is a central value of integrated education, with a high level of parental representation on Boards of Governors.

2.2 The origins of the sector can be traced back to 1974 when a group of parents called All Children Together lobbied successfully for legislation which would allow existing schools to become integrated (Education (NI) Act 1977). The first planned integrated school (Lagan College) was established by parents in Belfast in 1981. Integrated education was given a major fillip through the Education Reform (NI) Order 1989 (article 64) which, for the first time, placed a statutory duty on the Department of Education to 'encourage and facilitate' the development of integrated education. The Order also gave the department the power to fund a central, representative body to develop, support and promote integrated education in Northern Ireland – the Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education (NICIE was

established 1987).There are now 62 integrated schools in Northern Ireland with an enrolment in 2013/14 of 21,206 pupils or approximately 6.7% of the overall school population.

2.3 What is shared education? Shared education refers to schools from different sectors working together in a sustained process ranging from two or more schools making shared use of specialist facilities, through to coordinated timetabling, and pupils taking classes across a network of schools. The Ministerial Advisory Report on Shared Education (2013: xiii) defines it as:

> *Shared education involves two or more schools or other educational institutions from different sectors working in collaboration with the aim of delivering educational benefits to learners, promoting the efficient and effective use of resources, and promoting equality of opportunity, good relations, equality of identity, respect for diversity and community cohesion.*

2.4 Shared education is distinct from integrated education. The essential point is that shared education involves inter sectoral collaboration to improve both educational and reconciliation outcomes. It seeks to create interdependencies between schools mostly through delivering core curriculum activities where teachers and pupils work together across schools to achieve higher quality educational experiences. Shared education recognises that schools have interdependent relationships and promotes positive inter sectoral collaboration to support the common good.

2.5 Shared education has been delivered through 3 project providers: Queen's University Belfast, the Fermanagh Trust and the North Eastern Education and Library Board PIEE project. In 2012/13 there were 101 primary schools and 61 post-primary schools involved in the Shared Education Programme with 12,771 pupils participating (4% of the school population). We set out the key differences between shared and integrated education in table 1. We do however see the practical distinction between shared and integrated education as a false dichotomy. Instead, we argue that there is a spectrum of collaboration which is possible between schools ranging from: schools working in isolation through, ad hoc collaboration, organic partnership, irregular (and less sustained) shared activity, regular sustained activity, culture of collegiality and institutional interdependence (Duffy, Baker and Stewart, 2013).

Table 1: Shared and Integrated Education – defining characteristics

	Shared Education	**Integrated Education**
Definitions	Shared education refers to schools from different sectors working together in a sustained and meaningful process ranging from two or more schools making shared use of specialist facilities, through to coordinated timetabling, and pupils taking classes across a network of schools.	Integrated education brings together in one school, children, parents, teachers and governors from Catholic and Protestant traditions and those from other faiths or none.
Characteristics	The focus of shared education is delivering core curriculum activities where teachers and pupils work together across schools to achieve higher quality educational experiences. Shared education recognises that schools have interdependent relationships and promotes positive collaboration to support the common good. Shared education involves parental, pupil, teacher and community involvement.	Pupils experience an education that gives them the opportunity to understand, respect and celebrate all cultural and religious traditions. Parental involvement is a central value of integrated education, with a high level of parental representation on Boards of Governors.

	Shared Education	**Integrated Education**
Numbers involved	Maintain the percentage of schools engaged in shared education on a whole school basis at 15% (114) in the 2014/15 academic year and increase to 20% (152) by 2017/18 (from DE Business Plan for Shared Education Signature Project).	21,206 (62 schools) or 6.7% of school population.
Key transformative changes	· Programme for Government commitments to shared education. · Building a United Community commitment to share education: 'we will enhance the quality and extent of shared education provision, thus ensuring that sharing in education becomes a central part of every child's educational experience'. · 10 new shared education campuses. · Ministerial endorsement of shared education and commitment to mainstream it to become part of the 'DNA' of education system.	· Parental choice for parents who wish to send their children to integrated schools. · Legislative commitment by Department of Education to 'encourage and facilitate' integrated education. · State funding for integrated schools. · Justice Treacy's ruling (2014): integrated schooling cannot be delivered by schools with a predominantly Catholic or Protestant ethos – integrated education is a stand-alone concept.
Legacy	Cross-sectoral interdependency between schools for education and reconciliation benefits. Boundaries between existing sectors are now porous.	Solid base of integrated schools with opportunities for further growth to meet parental demand.

3. Enablers and Barriers

3.1 There are both public policy and legislative enablers. For example, the Northern Ireland Executive entitled Together: Building a United Community (T:BUC), makes a clear commitment to shared education as follows:

> *We believe that creating more opportunities for socially-mixed, shared education, with a view to achieving a full shared education system in Northern Ireland, is a crucial part of breaking the cycle of inter-generational educational underachievement unemployment, and sectarianism; and improving good relations amongst and for our young people. This must also be considered within the context of the increasing diversity of our society, which is reflected within the school environment. Through this Strategy, we will enhance the quality and extent of shared education provision, thus ensuring that sharing in education becomes a central part of every child's educational experience. T:BUC (2013: 48).*

3.2 Under the banner Delivering Social Change there is now a Shared Education Signature project which commits £25m from OFMDFM, the Department of Education and Atlantic Philanthropies to take shared education from pilot schools to scale throughout Northern Ireland. In addition, the Northern Ireland Executive has committed to building 10 shared education campuses. These projects should make a significant contribution towards mainstreaming shared education.

3.3   The Ministerial Advisory Report Advancing Shared Education (2013) recommended a statutory duty on the Department of Education (and ESA) to encourage and facilitate shared education as defined in the report. The Minister of Education told the NI Assembly (22nd October 2013):

Shared education is rolling out as we speak. I would like to see a legal definition put in place through the ESA Bill. However, if the ESA continues to be delayed, I will consider bringing forward legislation to introduce a definition of shared education separate from the ESA Bill, as I place such importance on it.

Given the collapse of the ESA bill we suggest separate legislation to enable the development of shared education as follows:

(1)   There will be a duty on schools to collaborate in the delivery of education on a cross community and cross sectoral basis.

(2)   Duties

    i   **Duty of schools**

        a.   There will be a duty on schools to collaborate[1] on a cross community basis[2] as defined in the footnotes below.

        b.   Principals and the Board of Governors shall take steps to ensure that opportunities are created for sustained, regular cross community contact between pupils through the delivery of Education. These commitments should be defined in school development plans and take into account existing DENI guidance on school improvement and educational delivery.

    ii.   **Duty of new (combined) Education and Library Board (ELB)**

        a.   There will be a duty on the new (combined) Education and Library Board to ensure curriculum choices are made available to all students based on the shared education model. The ELB will provide support, guidance, resources and funding of shared activities based on the statutory curriculum.

    iii.   **Duty of the Department of Education Northern Ireland**

        a.   There will be a duty on the Department for Education Northern Ireland (DENI) to monitor and evaluate the delivery of education on a cross community basis.

        b.   The Education and Library Board will have a duty to report on all schools cross-community partnership work and disseminate best practice both to DENI and throughout the ELB.

(Laura Lundy, Queens University Belfast)

3.4   Barriers: At the macro level there is a statutory duty on the Department of Education under the Education Reform (NI) Order 1989 to encourage and facilitate the development of integrated education. There is also a call from the Ministerial Advisory Group on Shared Education (2013) for the same legal duty to be applied to shared education. Neither of these has however translated into a clear blueprint for a fully shared and/or integrated system of education. Hence, government intentions are aspirational rather than practical involving time-bound targets, associated funding to achieve significant change and measurable educational outcomes.

---

1   Definition of collaborate. By collaborate we are referring to schools working together on a regular, sustained basis in the delivery of statutory curricular subjects. "Collaborate" also refers to the delivery of extra-curricular activities.

2   Definition of "cross-community". By "cross community" we recognise the existence of controlled, maintained, voluntary, integrated, special education resource centres and Irish Medium provision. "Cross community collaboration" occurs when schools from different management types work together on a regular, sustained basis.

3.5   One of the key barriers to shared and integrated education is the area planning process which has attracted a large response through public consultation. There is evidence that in some cases ELBs have chosen to ignore grassroots opinion which offers potential local shared education solutions. This represents the worse type of paternalism on the part of school managing authorities; a 'we know best attitude' reinforced by a needs model in the area plans which is based on 3 separate sectors: controlled, maintained and integrated schools. Such an approach stifles 'innovation and creativity' which the Department of Education implored the Education and Library Boards and CCMS to embrace in their approach to area planning.

3.6   The Education Minister has encouraged public engagement in the future reorganisation of the education estate, in particular bottom-up solutions. There is evidence that people are much more advanced in their thinking than managing authorities which have acted as gatekeepers for local solutions and sought to protect their own sectoral interests. In short, the area planning consultation process has been tokenistic.

3.7   Another barrier to the development of shared education is that the Programme for Government (PfG) commitments may be treated in a 'light touch' way through the Entitlement Framework, Area Learning Communities, Extended Schools, and the Community Relations, Equality and Diversity Policy (CRED). The inclusion of shared education targets within the PfG, whilst encouraging, are weak. What does 'ensuring that all children have the opportunity to participate in shared education by 2015' actually mean when shared education in this context has been undefined? Moreover, the Minister's reference to shared education being an integral part of the way in which the Entitlement Framework operates lacks conviction as the Department of Education has no way of telling – they cannot provide evidence to substantiate this claim. The concern is that shared education morphs into community relations work rather than an opportunity to improve educational performance on a cross-community basis, with DE taking a passive role.

3.8   In addition, the sectoral vested interests, in particular the churches, maintain a resistance to a change in the status quo. While maintained schools, for example, have been active participants in shared education, they do not see their involvement in the long term as a substitute for exclusively Catholic education. An associated barrier is the political risks linked with creating a more shared education system since it blurs the traditional boundaries and could impact on the medium term voting habits in a political system which has reflected a segregated society.

3.9   The existing sectoral based teacher training degree programmes compound the status quo and can act as a barrier to a system which is attempting to become more shared and integrated. The new opportunities and challenges created by systemic educational change need to be reflected in the ways in which new teachers are trained and the professional development needs of existing teachers. There is little point in a structural reconfiguration of the school system without accompanying investment in those professionals which teach our pupils.

4.   Other jurisdictions

4.1   Although the Shared Education Programme has a specific focus on Northern Ireland, there is the potential for wider learning in countries in, or emerging from, conflict. A team from the Centre for Shared Education in Queen's University were invited to support the work being carried out to tackle divisions with the Macedonian education system. This, in turn, has leveraged funding (from UNICEF and USAID) in support of a shared education programme between ethnic Macedonian and Albanian schools. Queen's University has been advising on the formulation and implementation of this programme given their experience in Northern Ireland.

4.2   A team from Queen's Shared Education Programme also travelled to Israel to participate in workshops and seminars on shared education. Working with Queen's, the Nazareth Academic

Institute examined ways to implement research outcomes within its constituency, namely students in a college of higher education and the communities surrounding it. Queen's is also co-operating with Hand in Hand, Centre for Jewish-Arab Education in Israel in order to explore shared options for school age children and their communities. Hand in Hand was founded in 1997 as a centre for Jewish-Arab Education in Israel and builds peace, coexistence and equality through a network of integrated, bilingual schools for Jewish and Arab children.

4.3   Atlantic's collaboration with the Office of the Minister and Deputy First Minister (OFMDFM) in the Shared Education Signature project will link us into a European Centre for Delivering Social Change which, inter alia, which carry out work that provides a research-policy-practice nexus for policy initiatives at the centre of government. The Centre will disseminate best social change practice [outwards] to other European countries and learn from developments elsewhere [inwards] which will help tackle key thematic areas in the Northern Ireland social change agenda. Shared education research, policy and practice will be a core theme in the European Centre for Delivering Social Change.

4.4   Perry (2012) provides examples of shared education in other jurisdictions: shared campuses in Scotland; federation in England and Wales; communities of schools in Belgium; and school clusters in New Zealand. The Scottish experience of shared campuses was very positive despite initial concerns that denominational schools might lose their ethos. The federated model also offers a useful comparator for Northern Ireland. This is where two or more schools share leadership and governance arrangements. The literature notes that while federations require a larger budget in comparison to an individual school, economies of scale may be realised, and increased costs are offset by greater resources. In a recent Ofsted report on federations, inspectors found educational provision and outcomes had shown improvement, with the federated model as a contributory factor to the improvement.

5.   Priorities and Actions

5.1   At the strategic level there is a need for the Northern Ireland Executive, Assembly and Department of Education to agree a future plan for a fully integrated and shared system of education moving forward. We need to move from aspirations to pragmatic systemic changes. The investments by Atlantic Philanthropies and IFI have demonstrated clear economic, education and societal benefits of shared education – what is needed is to embed shared and integrated education comprehensively in the delivery of education in Northern Ireland.

5.2   Beyond this strategic goal the key priorities and actions are scaling-up shared education in a meaningful way rather than a superficial engagement in short-term community relations work. The key priorities and actions are listed in table 2.

Table 2: Scaling-Up Shared Education

Scaling up Shared Education	There are a number of elements involved in scaling up the levels of collaboration and sharing between schools. Typically this will comprise work across a number of areas including:
	Support for Shared Governance · Participants: Chairs of governors; all governors; governors sub-committee · Activities: agreed shared governance arrangements; promote school partnership; employment of staff; agree shared policies; and, oversight of partnership transactions/finance. **Shared School Management** · Participants: Principals and Vice Principals · Activities: Embed and promote philosophy of the partnership; Principals work closely with Vice Principals to shape programme; deployment of staff across the partnership; employment of staff; and, financial management. **Shared Curriculum Planning** · Participants: Principals and Vice Principals · Activities: Maximise shared curriculum in order to reduce duplication and provide broadest choice possible; agreed benchmarking, assessment and target setting; synchronisation of timetabling; agreed teaching and learning strategies formulated; and Identification of future need. **Shared Teaching & Learning** · Participants: Heads of department; subject specialist teachers; and teachers · Activities: Agreed teaching and learning strategies implemented; shared plans and schemes of work; audit of existing resources within partnership; maximise the use of existing resources across partnership; joint staff training; and creation of shared policies. **Shared Classes** · Participants: Pupils · Activities: Pupils engaged in shared classes and learning; shared student council; and shared pupil extra-curricular activities (sports, choir/music etc).
	Educational Improvement In addition to the above, school partnerships should be encouraged to specifically develop shared plans focused on improving educational outcomes. Likely activities to be supported will include: · Assistance to identify common areas of educational need; · Conduct a curriculum audit which identifies duplication of provision, areas of under- provision and how best to address these issues. · Identify complementary expertise and how schools intend to use it to benefit the partnership. · Highlight existing resources that could be shared for the benefit of the partnership (physical space, ICT suites etc.). The schools will provide a rationale as to how existing resources can be used more efficiently and effectively across the partnership in a sustainable manner. · Identify opportunities for the development of common teaching and learning strategies, benchmarking and standards across the partnership with a focus on improving educational outcomes. · Identify opportunities for shared training and capacity building and how they intend to provide access to these on an on-going process. · Demonstrate how the cross-sectoral partnership will lead to improved educational provision across the partnership. · Identify additional resources that they would require to progress the work of the partnership in terms of improving educational outcomes.

Outputs	
The above activities will result in the following outputs:	• Increase in the number of schools involved in shared education delivery. • Increased level of interdependence in the school system. • Increase in the number of joint governance schools (models of confederation, federation, co-location and possibly shared campuses).
Expected Outcomes	
The outcomes from this work should result in:	• Improved educational outcomes and enhanced access to curriculum for all pupils involved in shared education. • Normalised peer-to-peer cross-community relationships built through regular contact within mainstream education. • Shared education becomes a core element of all schools' strategic planning and day-to- day functional activities. • The Department of Education will fund, incentivise and formally regulate shared education. • The Education and Training Inspectorate's (ETI) will incorporate shared education activities as a component part of their regular inspection process of schools. • Learning from shared education exemplars will inform international best practice on transforming segregated education systems.

6. Conclusions

6.1 The Ministerial statement Advancing Shared Education (22nd October 2013) noted:

■ Shared education must become the accepted reality at every stage of education, from early years to post-graduate study…We need to ensure that sharing is in the DNA of our education system: in legislation, policy and the structure of ESA.

■ Sharing brings: educational benefits, respect for diversity and good relations. It builds equality and a confident community. So my vision is one of education without barriers; good schools where children learn, grow and develop together.

6.2 Atlantic Philanthropies and the International Fund for Ireland have, through the Shared Education Programme, developed the concept, practice and supporting evidence to demonstrate the benefits of shared education. We see the role of DE and the new unitary Education and Library Board as embedding our work in the system.

See appendix 1 for a sample of the evidence on the effectiveness of shared education

Appendix 1: Some examples of evidence on shared education

Title	Author(s) and source
Are separate schools divisive? A case study from Northern Ireland	Joanne Hughes (2010) British Educational Research Journal, iFirst Article, 1–22.
Sharing classes between separate schools: a mechanism for improving inter-group relations in Northern Ireland?	Joanne Hughes, Simon Lolliot Miles Hewstone, Katharina Schmid & Karen Carlisle (2012)Policy Futures in Education 10 (5)
School partnerships and reconciliation: an evaluation of school collaboration in Northern Ireland	Joanne Hughes, Caitlin Donnelly, Tony Gallagher & Karen Carlisle (2010) http://www.schoolsworkingtogether.co.uk/
Sustaining Cross-Sector Collaboration: An examination of schools involved in the first cohort of the Sharing Education Programme	Gavin Duffy &Tony Gallagher (2012) http://www.schoolsworkingtogether.co.uk/
Collaborative evolution:The context of sharing and collaboration in contested space	Gavin Duffy & Tony Gallagher (2012) http://www.schoolsworkingtogether.co.uk/
Sharing education through schools working together'	Gallagher, T., Stewart, A., Walker, R., Baker, M. and Lockhart, J. (2010) Shared Space: A research journal on peace, conflict and community relations in Northern Ireland, 6, 65-74
School collaboration in Northern Ireland: opportunities for reconciliation.	C. Donnelly & T. Gallagher (2008) http://www.schoolsworkingtogether.co.uk/
The Sharing Education Programme Attitudinal Research Results	FGS McClure Watters (2010) http://www.schoolsworkingtogether.co.uk/
Inter-group contact at school and social attitudes: Evidence from Northern Ireland	Joanne Hughes (2012)Oxford Review of Education (under review)
Promoting good relations: the role of schools in Northern Ireland	Joanne Hughes and Caitlin Donnelly (2012) *(Eds) Cillian McGrattan and Elizabeth Meehan, Everyday Life After the Conflict The Impact of Devolution and North-South Cooperation. Manchester University Press. (In Press)*
Contact and context: Sharing education and building relationships in a divided society	Joanne Hughes (2012a), Research papers in Education (Under review)
The School in the plural and divided Society	Joanne Hughes and Caitlin Donnelly (2012a) Introduction to Policy Futures in education
Key Issues in Coexistence and Education	Tony Gallagher (2010)Boston: Brandeis University Coexistence International http://www.clubmadrid.org/img/secciones/CI_Key_Issues_in_Coexistence_Education_Jan_2010.pdf
Sharing Education Programme: Views from the White Board	Colin Knox (2010) http://www.schoolsworkingtogether.co.uk/
Community Engagement in the Education Policy Debate	Colin Knox (2012) Draft paper (see authors)University of Ulster, Newtownabbey, Northern Ireland BT37 0QB. (Email: vk.borooah@ulster.ac.uk cg.knox@ulster.ac.uk

Title	Author(s) and source
The Economics of Shared Education Programme	Vani Borooah and Colin Knox Draft paper University of Ulster, Newtownabbey, Northern Ireland BT37 0QB. (Email: vk.borooah@ulster.ac.uk cg.knox@ulster.ac.uk
The Economics of School Closures in Northern Ireland	Vani Borooah and Colin Knox Draft paper University of Ulster, Newtownabbey, Northern Ireland BT37 0QB. (Email: vk.borooah@ulster.ac.uk cg.knox@ulster.ac.uk
Educational Performance and Post-Primary Schools in Northern Ireland	Vani Borooah and Colin Knox Draft Paper University of Ulster, Newtownabbey, Northern Ireland BT37 0QB. (Email: vk.borooah@ulster.ac.uk cg.knox@ulster.ac.uk
Northern Ireland's School Funding Formula: Explanation and Critique	Vani Borooah and Colin Knox Draft Paper University of Ulster, Newtownabbey, Northern Ireland BT37 0QB. (Email: vk.borooah@ulster.ac.uk cg.knox@ulster.ac.uk
A Critique of the Education and Library Boards' Area Plans	Vani Borooah and Colin Knox Draft Paper University of Ulster, Newtownabbey, Northern Ireland BT37 0QB. (Email: vk.borooah@ulster.ac.uk cg.knox@ulster.ac.uk
Community Engagement in the Education Policy Debate	Colin Knox (2012) Draft paper (see authors)University of Ulster, Newtownabbey, Northern Ireland BT37 0QB. (Email: vk.borooah@ulster.ac.uk cg.knox@ulster.ac.uk
Inter-school collaboration	Atkinson et al. (2007)NFER@ Queens
Education and a shared future: Options for sharing and collaboration in Northern Ireland schools	O'Sullivan et al. (2008) http://www.schoolsworkingtogether.co.uk/
Activity Theory in Practice: Promoting learning across boundaries and agencies	Daniels, H, Edwards, A, Engestrom, U and Gallagher, T (Eds) (2009) London: Routledge (Pp239 ISBN 978-0-415-47724-6)
Breaking through silence: tackling controversial barriers through inter-professional engagement.	Gallagher, T and Carlisle, K (2009) In H Daniels et al (Eds) Activity Theory in Practice: Promoting learning across boundaries and agencies, London: Routledge (Pp140-159)
A Deliberative Poll on Education: what provision do informed parents in Northern Ireland want?	Fishkin, J, Gallagher, T, Luskin, R, McGrady, J, O'Flynn, I and Russell, D (2007) http://www.schoolsworkingtogether.co.uk/documents/Views%20from%20the%20White%20Board%20May%202010.pdf
Developing the case for Shared Education	Oxford Economics (2010) IEF
Sharing over Separation - Part B - Promoting Shared Education	Russell (2009)CRC research reports No. 8 http://gtcni.openrepository.com/gtcni/bitstream/2428/56439/1/part-b-d-russell.pdf

Title	Author(s) and source
The Contribution of Shared Education to Catholic-Protestant reconciliation in Northern Ireland: a third way?	Borooah, Vani and Knox, C. *British Educational Research Journal,* Vol. 39 (5), 2013, pp. 925-946 (with Vani Borooah).
Reconciliation and Human Rights in Northern Ireland: A False Dichotomy?	Knox, C and Beirne, M. '*Journal of Human Rights Practice,* Vol. 6 (1), 2014, pp. 26 – 50
Access and Performance Inequalities: post primary education in Northern Ireland	Borooah, Vani and Knox, C. *Journal of Poverty and Social Justice*, Vol. 22 (2), 2014: pp. 111-135
Segregation, Inequality and Educational Performance in Northern Ireland: problems and solutions	Borooah, Vani and Knox, C. *International Journal of Educational Development* (in press 2014)

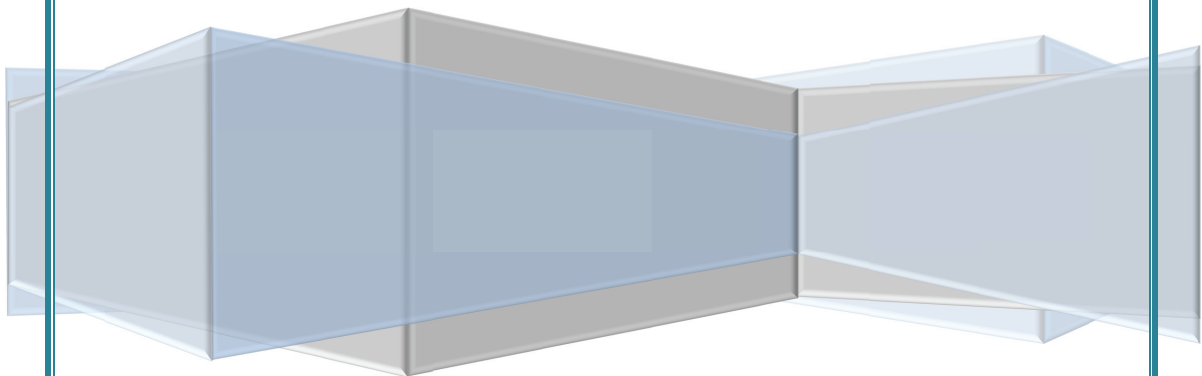# Ballycastle High School and Cross and Passion College

Northern Ireland Assembly Committee for Education

Shared and Integrated Education Inquiry

Shared Education in Moyle

I Williamson and Barbara Ward

1

In Moyle, both Ballycastle High School and Cross and Passion College have a sense of helping to shape the future:

Background:

We have a strong sense of the successful history enjoyed by both schools and by the pupils who have attended our schools over the years. Pupils are drawn mainly from the town of Ballycastle and the rural hinterland surrounding the town. We enjoy a high level of loyalty from the community, with in many instances, several generations of families having attended the schools.

While enjoying this sense of history we are very aware of the role played by Ballycastle High School and Cross and Passion College in having helped to shape the future.

This vision of collaboration, efficient use of resources and increased choice, has proven to be highly beneficial to the pupils, parents, schools and the local community. This vision continues to grow with our involvement in the Shared Education Programme with Atlantic Philanthropies and Q.U.B. This project and current support has enabled further advancements of our vision to enhance shared provision for post-primary pupils in the Ballycastle area. At Key Stages 4 and 5 significant progress has been made in relation to meeting the requirements of the Entitlement Framework and furthering cross curricular activities.

The vision and ethos has grown organically within a heartfelt context of mutual dependency and respect for each-others differences. This non-threatening sense of shared purpose and simple 'good neighbourliness' has impacted significantly on cross community relations.

In a socially deprived area such as ours, many parents still just want the best life chances possible for their children. This is the pervading attitude of most of our parents. But this sense of aspiration and expectation has to be nurtured by effective communication and genuine open, caring relationships. Parents know that every child matters in both our schools. We earnestly endeavour to show our parents that education has in the past and can in the future provide the vehicle for their children's advancement.

We are both non-selective schools and our pupils cover the full range in relation to academic ability. Both schools benefit hugely from that diversity and the wide range of talents, characteristics and personalities presented by each of our pupils.

Our location and degree of geographic isolation has also been of benefit, with parents choosing to send their children to us instead of attending schools elsewhere. But we cannot take this for granted and the teaching staff and support staff are keenly aware of our need to continue to be successful schools which enjoy the full confidence of the community.

2

Nature of Shared Education in Ballycastle

Almost 300 pupils attend weekly shared curricular classes – 139 CPC pupils taking classes in BHS and 148 BHS pupils taking classes in CPC.

Vision and Leadership

- Collaborative Sub-committees with representatives from both of Boards of Governors has been formed – their focus relates to the planning of the collaborative curriculum offer, standards and attainment and pastoral care and well- being of pupils involved in the collaboration.

- Governors have jointly agreed the core values/ principles underpinning the partnership and the purpose of the collaborative arrangements (Appendix One)

- There is a shared approach School Development Planning in relation to 14-19 attainment and related school improvement actions.

- Regular opportunities for leaders at levels of management in the school to meet plan monitor and evaluate provision together – this includes Principals, Senior Leaders, Curriculum and Pastoral Leaders

Curriculum

- The partnership provides a wide range of BTEC, AS/A level and GCSE subjects, with subject option blocks aligned. 6th Form and Key Stage 4 provision meets Entitlement Framework requirements. Additional subjects are delivered in partnership with Northern Regional College.

- The nature of the curriculum offer reflects the ' All Ability', inclusive nature of the two schools, the diverse nature of young peoples' aspiration in terms of their progression to further and higher education as well as the needs of the local and wider economy

Extra- Curricular / Curricular Enrichment Provision includes:

- A Joint School council ensure that pupils views and opinions are sought and taken on board in relation to planning and organisation of provision

- A range of shared careers education events

- Joint Year 8 and 9 Rugby team

- Joint Choir, concerts and orchestral activities.

- Charity fundraising activities.

3

There is much evidence that the impact of the partnership extends beyond the classrooms into the wider community.

The Report of the Ministerial Advisory Group 2013; 'Advancing Shared Education' suggested that there are seven key principles that need be at the heart of efforts to advance shared education.

Shared Education:

1.Welcomes and celebrates diversity and respects the right of children and young people to be educated in accordance with their own religious, cultural or philosophical traditions while also ensuring that they develop an understanding and respect for others by having significant and meaningful opportunities to be educated together with those from different backgrounds;

2. Ensures that all children have access to a quality education and enjoy equal opportunities within the education system, and thus has a particular concern with identifying and meeting the needs of children and young people from vulnerable and/or marginalised backgrounds;

3. Is built upon strong links with parents and care-givers, fostered in early childhood and maintained throughout each child's progression through the education system, and respects the role they play in supporting their child's education and development;

4. Provides all children and young people with a broad-based and holistic education whilst also ensuring that this is progressively tailored to meet their individual needs and to help develop their particular strengths and talents to the fullest;

5. Helps children and young people develop a greater awareness of and respect for diversity, in all its forms, and equips them with the knowledge and skills to be able to live in an open, inclusive and confident society;

6. Respects the rights and dignity of all children and young people, ensures that their views and opinions are heard and responded to and promotes their safety and wellbeing; and

7. Acknowledges the central importance of good leadership in schools and the quality of teachers and support staff and thus places a particular emphasis on ensuring high quality initial teacher education and continuing professional development opportunities that encourage teachers and educationalists learning and sharing together.

It is our contention that the above summary encompasses the core and essence of what shared education is in the Ballycastle context.

4

Key Barriers and Enablers for Shared Education

This response is based on the experience of a long standing sharing of educational resources and expertise in Ballycastle. It reflects our thoughts on barriers and enablers at system wide level.

Enablers

The strength and quality of the partnership is a crucial enabler. Shared education will flourish in a strong partnership where;

- each partner feels equal and is confident of the purpose, worth and value of their own institution and of the contribution it can make to the success of the partnership
- the essential nature of the context, history, ethos and value system in each school is understood and respected
- where there is a strong sense of common purpose and commitment to the concept of sharing for the greater good of the young people and the wider community in which they will live and work

The Commitment of Key Stakeholders:

The support of those working at **planning and policy level** in the education system at all levels is vital if Shared Education is become a recognised part of the education system in Northern Ireland. This includes:

- Department of Education
- The new Education Authority including the full range of educational stakeholders included in this ELB's / CCMS / Trustees/ Others

It is essential that those who are key decision makers see this a an authentic, sustainable and appropriate option for communities which can impact positively in three ways;

- It can provide the option for a choice of type of school which reflects the aspirations, beliefs, culture and identity of pupils and their parents whilst at the same providing authentic, high quality opportunities to accept diversity and indeed come to understand and value each-others traditions
- It can avoid duplication, make economic sense through the sharing of resources
- Sharing and good use of resources can have a significant impact on outcomes for young people

The confidence of Parents and Pupils

Pupils and their parents need to be absolutely confident that the sharing arrangements will work for their pupils – entrusting your child's education, even if it is only in a limited number of subjects to another school is a real challenge. It is vital therefore that the quality of leadership, teaching and learning and well-being and care of young people is of the highest standard possible. Where there are shared arrangements, pupils and their parents must be kept well informed about the

5

opportunities available through sharing, arrangements for monitoring progress, meeting teachers and so on. The arrangement needs to be underpinned by Service Level Agreements, robust protocols and shared policies relating to key areas of shared educational experience.

Policy context

It is important that the policy context for education enables Shared Education however it is equally important that Shared Education will enhance the implementation of policy.

For example, the following DE policy areas can be delivered much more efficiently and effectively in some areas where well established shared arrangements exist:

- Entitlement Framework
- ESAGS – Raising Educational Attainment
- Literacy and Numeracy Strategy including the Signature Teacher Project
- Tackling educational disadvantage
- STEM activities
- CRED

Meeting a real educational need

Shared Education will only be successful in the educational and economic sense if it meets a real need. Where it facilitates enhanced curriculum provision and choice for young people, where it increases access to specialist teaching and or accommodation and where it makes better use of resources, it will be effective and worthwhile.

Training and Development of Governors and Staff

The development of high quality Shared Education experiences is a challenge for school leaders, governors and staff. It adds an additional, but in our experience very worthwhile layer to the leadership, governance, and management of schools involved. The availability of training opportunities would;

- Increase awareness of the significant benefits / opportunities which shared education offers
- Increase awareness of the particular challenges
- Support schools in developing the leadership capabilities of those involved
- Facilitate the sharing of good practice

Co-location

Shared Education opportunities have to make sense and enhance young peoples' experience as opposed to adding unnecessary cost and travel time. It therefore works best where school are in close proximity to one another.

6

Barriers

There are a number of potential barriers to Shared Education Arrangements – on reflection they mostly relate to the absence of the 'Enablers' outlined above.

Geographical Distance

Sharing of day to day educational experiences is infinitely more difficult if it involves long distances and the use of public transport / taxis etc on a long term basis and is therefore often a barrier to authentic, sustained sharing.

7

Priorities and actions to improve Shared Education including relevant parts of CRED policy.

The aim of the CRED policy is to:

Contribute to improving relations between communities by educating children and young people to develop self-respect and respect for others, promote equality and work to eliminate discrimination, and by providing formal and non-formal education opportunities for them to build relationships with those of different backgrounds and traditions within the resources available.

In every sense the aim of the Community Relations Equality and Diversity policy is totally embedded in the ethos of both Cross and Passion College and Ballycastle High School. The key relationships within the partnership have been nurtured in an organic, genuine, natural evolution. A culture of mutual respect for each other's differences and a genuine desire to be good neighbours permeates every aspect of what the schools do.

However, there is no scope for complacency and everyone has to be mindful of inadvertent issues arising which may have unforeseen negative consequences. Everyone is mindful of the power of perception which is not borne out in reality. Poor communication or mixed messages can create misunderstandings which are at best inconvenient and at worst damaging to the partnership.

Both schools have separate identities reflecting the key aspects of faith, aspiration and identity for their respective communities. The fact that a choice exists as to which school parents/guardians choose to send pupils to is critical. There is nothing threatening or competitive in the relationship that exists in Ballycastle between the two schools. The fundamental premise that ours is a partnership based upon mutual need and individual choice is correct and highly significant.

The objectives of the CRED policy are:

- Ensure that learners, at each stage of their development, have an understanding of and respect for the rights, equality and diversity of all without discrimination; and

- Educate children and young people to live and participate in a changing world, so that they value and respect difference and engage positively with it, taking account of the ongoing intercommunity divisions arising from conflict and increasing diversity within our society; and

- Equip children and young people with the skills, attitudes and behaviours needed to develop mutual understanding and recognition of, and respect for, difference.

It is our contention that the experience of Shared Education in Ballycastle more than fulfils the aims and objectives of the CRED policy. However, it may be the case that this has been largely by default as opposed to design. The catalyst which initiated the partnership and is still at its heart, is to have a pragmatic relationship which best meets the educational needs of post primary pupils in Ballycastle and the surrounding area. In our locality, this is best achieved through Shared Education. As long both schools continue to successfully meet this need and achieve good outcomes for all pupils then the partnership will prosper. However, if parents or guardians lose faith in the educational capabilities of either school then the partnership will struggle. The societal and cross community benefits which have developed for our partnership are strong. However, they would be negatively impacted if confidence was lost in either school.

8

<u>**Appendix One**</u>   **Making the Partnership work in Ballycastle**

The essence of Shared Education in Ballycastle has been present for many decades. The partnership has been nurtured and developed on a basis **of joint need** and mutual respect and a desire to develop in an organic and sensitive way.

A desire to best meet the educational needs of post-primary pupils in the area, has resulted in a sense that the two main denominations and communities in Ballycastle and the surrounding area are closer together. This has obviously been benefited by increasing social and political stability over a number of years.

Promoting Standards and higher levels of achievement

Of key importance in our Shared Education partnership is expecting, setting and communicating high standards of teaching, and achievement for both teachers and pupils. Promoting a culture of high expectations and success from all pupils, of all abilities, is fundamental to the success of both schools and the partnership. Fostering and sustaining a work ethic within the schools among the pupil body is again central. Closely monitoring on an agreed regular basis, the standards of work, effort, tracking and target setting for each pupil and sharing the results with pupils and their parents. Frequently communicated to provide immediate feedback to pupils on their progress and allowing parents to feel part of the achievement process. Hard working pupils are rewarded and recognised – 'there is no drug like success'! We jointly continue to develop the effective use of data to inform target setting, and we see further potential in developing this. It is the level of success achieved by pupils in both our schools which provides the 'cement' that sustains the partnership

As Senior Leaders we feel it is important to be aware of our own need to develop professionally and to work effectively with others. We are continually striving to develop a collegiate approach among our staff towards the work of the partnership. Teachers work together to enable staff to be more aware of whole school issues such as discipline, extra-curricular enrichment activities, and raising standards. This means that the partnership works as a team for the good of all the pupils involved. Enabling senior colleagues to have their leadership skills fully realised and utilised to empower them to develop their strategic views and opinions is also essential.

Well being

A culture of pro-active Pastoral Care and a firm, fair and compassionate approach to discipline is very important to pupils, parents and guardians in both schools. Maintaining effective discipline in the schools avoids many time-consuming problems of a pastoral/behavioural nature which dissipate teachers' energy; frustrate both pupils and their parents and which dilute the education and sharing process. These standards come from the top and need to be implemented in a firm, fair, consistent and compassionate way. In practice this means:

- Daily exchange of information eg absentees and events etc.
- Close pastoral contacts with Heads of Year and scheduled meetings.
- Regular joint Departmental Meetings for subjects sharing teaching.

9

- Btec Meetings – Consortium arrangements in place.
- Co-ordination of Parents' Afternoons with parents going to each school to speak to teachers.
- Joint 6th Form Student Council
- Leadership Awards
- Sports coaching training

As our partnership has grown and become more embedded the requirement to avoid needless administrative and systemic barriers has been considered. We have taken steps to minimise issues but this is an ongoing challenge and needs to be constantly monitored, evaluated and reviewed.

Both schools now:

- Endeavour to synchronise holidays and Staff Development Days.
- Close co-ordination and co-operation in timetable construction and curriculum planning.
- Close liaison between Principals in relation to staffing requirements
- Occasional sharing of facilities eg Assembly Hall.
- Collaboration in relation to school improvement this has included alignment in relation to reporting times and systems, target setting and pupil tracking procedures.
- Regular joint staff development and training.
- Aligning of key objectives for PRSD.

The benefits of shared education have been:

- The partnership enables the schools to meet Entitlement Framework requirements.
- Pupils of both schools benefit from a broad range of curricular choice, allowing them to make the most of their talents and abilities.
- Staff benefit from mutually supportive networks, developing next practice.
- Staff, pupils and parents from different backgrounds interact in a sustained, regular basis.
- Societal and economic benefits.
- Joint Board of Governors Sub-groups meet to consider the key aspects of collaboration.
- Careful consideration is given to joint School Development Plan objectives.

Another enabling factor in the development of Shared Education has been engaging meaningfully with other external agencies in the local community. This is central to the dynamics that exist in the town of Ballycastle. For example charities, schools, churches, social services, the PSNI, Council etc all have their own agendas, but the combined synergy of these interactions does benefit significantly certain individuals in our schools and in the community. If co-ordinated and funded appropriately these combined actions can bring significant benefit to shared partnership. Finding the time to foster

10

these relationships is essential to the idea of partnership, sharing and networking. It can be difficult to find that time, but it is highly important.

It is a key priority in both Cross and Passion College and Ballycastle High School to have cognisance of the need to address potential underachievement in disadvantaged communities. Both schools serve a wide hinterland which has significant pockets of social deprivation. Meeting the needs of this constituency is important to maintaining our partnership. Of equal importance is meeting the aspirations of parents and pupils from other socio-economic backgrounds. Both schools are highly aware of this and as such also promote an ethos which closely aligned to a key area of securing accountability.

Both schools place importance on the monitoring of examination statistics and bench marking data which is necessary to reveal extent of any problem. Also, to promote and develop a culture in the partnership of self-reflection and school improvement by making effective use of the data that is available.

Both schools have in the past in offered supportive literacy and numeracy classes to pupils showing underachievement in the first three years. Also, the work currently underway in developing the use of Cross Curricular Skills for Levels of Progression does have the potential to further support literacy and numeracy, within and across the curriculum of both schools. The appointment on a joint basis of teachers to support Literacy and Numeracy as part of the Signature Project has proven to be successful and potentially provides a model for further development.

Both schools endeavour to make effective use of ICT resources to support literacy and numeracy and promote effective teaching and learning. This emphasis, coupled with purposeful whole class teaching and where appropriate, individual personalised support, is an attempt to ensure all pupils are supported to reach their potential. Work is currently on going with C2kni to develop the Partnership Exchange procedure which will permit easier access to staff and pupils in both schools to a wider range of C2k ICT based systems and resources in both schools.

The partnerships systems which relate to the review of performance and provision are constantly evolving and developing and being tweaked! The benefits at micro (school) and macro (system) level could be significant. But these must be managed within the dynamic, vibrant environment that is a school. We need to secure a balance, with the restrictions and pressures of time constraints and not losing sight of the fundamental importance of positive relationships in bringing about effective change.

Securing accountability within the context of Department of Education's School Improvement Policy – Every School a Good School The and 'Together towards improvement' – especially the latter - are good publications since they spell out what good practice looks like on the ground. The publication by the Education and Training Inspectorate of; 'Quality Indicators for use in the evaluation of IFI Sharing in Education Funded Projects' has also been a useful enabling tool.

Both Principals and Governors are very grateful for the effective practical support which is essential from external agencies. PEACE 3 funded projects, the Shared Education Project (Atlantic Philanthropies and Q.U.B.) and the North Eastern Education and Library Board funded Peace, Inclusion, Reconciliation, Citizenship and History Project (PIRCH) have been beneficial recent vehicles in moving forward with our Shared Education Partnership and collaborative arrangements. However, continued support from CASS, CCEA etc to support effective and co-ordinated implementation of our strategies is required. There is a real danger of overwhelming staff, which can create confusion. Gaining and retaining staff ownership of initiative implementation is essential to sustaining a

11

positive working culture in our schools and partnership. The situation is not helped when changes come about which necessitate re-planning and re-scheduling.

A key example of this barrier relates to funding for the Entitlement Framework. The uncertainty which surrounds this critical supportive scaffold of our partnership is most unhelpful. Senior Leaders and Governors need clear direction and information relating to funding which is required to sustain our collaborative arrangements.

The quality of support for schools from RTU in relation to Shared Education is important. The assistance provided to schools is particularly important at a time of significant staffing changes within a school. Anything which eases succession planning and transition in relation to leadership/teaching changes within a school is important. This takes on even more critical significance in a Shared Education Partnership when it is more than one school which can be impacted by significant staffing changes.

Both Principals feel that they must comment upon the fact that that both Ballycastle High School and Cross and Passion College are considered to be a relatively successful schools in an area of social deprivation. This fact is testament to the hard work of staff, parents and pupils – sometimes in difficult physical conditions. We are in dire need of suitable, effective and indeed at times, a healthy and safe working environment. Our staff and children should not be made to feel second class in relation to their school buildings. We feel it is important at this time of financial constraint, that we should not lose sight of the urgent need for school refurbishment if not replacement of schools.

Both schools require capital investment in order to facilitate the partnership achieving its full potential. It is vital that the statutory bodies continue to support the schools in facilitating proposals for bespoke new builds and shared centres that will allow the partnership to develop fully. The North Eastern Board Area Plan for the post-primary schools in Ballycastle and the Department of Education announcement in July, relating to the Shared Campuses Programme have been welcomed by all key stakeholders. It is important that these commitments are fulfilled as soon as possible.

12

Appendix 2

SHARED EDUCATION IN MOYLE

Core Values

It is really important to us that the partnership;

- Is all inclusive
- Caters for young people of all abilities and aptitudes
- Respects and promotes the unique identity and ethos of each school
- Reflects the needs and aspirations of the wider community
- Is pupil centred – the needs and well- being of young people at the centre
- Reaches out to and supports young people who are marginalised and vulnerable
- Embraces the richness of difference
- Promotes excellence – high standards
- Has the absolute confidence of the community
- Enables each young person to have a strong sense of loyalty to and pride in their own school
- Enables each young person to have a strong loyalty to and pride in the partnership

What is the purpose of the partnership?

- To enhance educational opportunities for all young people in post primary education in North Antrim – enhancing choice – promoting quality

- To improve outcomes for young people at Key Stages 4 and 5

- To make the best use of educational resources available

- To promote and nurture mutual respect and understanding as well as community cohesion

- To provide the local and wider community with young people who have the knowledge, skills and attitudes to make value contributions to the economic and community life the area

Ballymena Borough Council

Committee for Education Inquiry into Shared and Integrated Education

Written Evidence from Ballymena Borough Council

23 October 2014

Policy.unit@ballymena.co.uk

Inquiry Into Shared and Integrated Education Committee for Education

The Committee for Education is undertaking an Inquiry into Shared and Integrated Education and is seeking written submissions from interested parties by 24 October 2014.

The Terms of Reference are as follows:–

The Education Committee will:

- Review the nature and definition of Shared Education and Integrated Education as it applies across all educational phases – including consideration of the need for a formal statutory definition and an obligation in Statute to facilitate and encourage Shared Education;

- identify the key barriers and enablers for Shared Education and Integrated Education;

- identify and analyse alternative approaches and models of good practice in other jurisdictions in terms of policy interventions and programmes;

- Consider what priorities and actions need to be taken to improve sharing and integration – including the effectiveness of the relevant parts of the CRED (Community Relations, Equality and Diversity in Education) Policy;

- the need to engage more effectively with parents/carers; and the role of Special Schools;

    and

- Report to the Assembly on its findings and recommendations by Spring 2015.

Shared Education

"Shared education involves two or more schools or other educational institutions from different sectors working in collaboration with the aim of delivering educational benefits to learners, promoting the efficient and effective use of resources, and promoting equality of opportunity, good relations, equality of identity, respect for diversity and community cohesion.

In 2012 the Ministerial Advisory Group on the Advancement of Shared Education in Northern Ireland, states the organisation and delivery of shared education must :

- *Meet the needs of, and provide for the education of learners from all Section 75 categories and socio-economic groups together;*

- *involve schools and other education providers of differing ownership, sectoral identity and ethos, management type or governance arrangements; and*

- *deliver educational benefits to learners, promote the efficient and effective use of resources, and promotes equality of opportunity, good relations, equality of identity, respect for diversity and community cohesion."*

Submission

Ballymena Borough Council is of the view that there can be many positive impacts of Shared Education, as defined above. Shared Facilities/Campuses/Equipment has clear advantages for schools and the wider community in terms of resourcing/funding and efficiencies, which are becoming ever more important in the current economic and budgetary climate.

■ Shared Education can provide an important mechanism for ensuring that children and young people have access to a wider range of subjects and courses;

■ collaboration between schools can provide an effective means for teachers to share good practice and engage in professional development; and

■ research shows most children and young people, and their parents and/or care-givers, involved in Shared Education initiatives find the experience a positive one and encourage more positive attitudes and relationships between children and young people from different backgrounds.

However, Council are of the view:

■ It is important that particular models of collaboration are not imposed on schools but that they are allowed to develop organically, reflecting the needs and situations that exist at a local level;

■ the existing funding model for schools tends to create competition between schools and can inhibit the extent to which schools feel able to genuinely collaborate;

■ there are clear resource implications for schools and other educational institutions wishing to engage in Shared Education, and thus some mechanism for supporting and incentivising schools to be involved in cross-sectoral collaboration is required;

■ school collaboration is not easy and presents significant practical challenges in relation to matters such as timetabling, curriculum planning and transport and thus strong leadership within schools is essential; and

■ Council would also welcome a statutory definition of Shared Education.

Integrated Education

The Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education (NICIE) defines Integrated Education as follows:

"Integrated Education brings children and staff from Catholic and Protestant traditions, as well as those of other faiths, or none, together in one school. Integrated schools have been an alternative to an educational system in which most children attend largely religiously separated schools.

Integrated Schools differ from other schools in Northern Ireland by ensuring that children from diverse backgrounds are educated together every day in the same classrooms. Through their Admissions Criteria they enrol approximately equal numbers of Catholic and Protestant children, as well as children from other religious and cultural backgrounds.

It is important to note that Integrated schools are not secular but are essentially Christian in character and welcome all faiths, which aims to provide children with a caring and enhanced educational experience. Empowering them as individuals is seen as a priority so that as children grow and mature, they'll be able to affect positive change in a shared society."

Submission

Whilst Ballymena Borough Council appreciates the concerns and apprehensions that exist towards Integrated Education, Council generally believe that Integrated Education may represent a positive choice for some parents and pupils. In 32 years the number of children educated in Integrated schools has grown from 28 pupils in 1981 to nearly 22,000 today. This has been mainly brought about by a desire for a different choice of education for children and young people.

A recent Millward Brown survey found that 83% of parents in Belfast believe that Integrated Education is a vital part of building a shared future in Northern Ireland. Over 70% of parents believe that adequate funding for Integrated Education should be made available, with enough places available for those who wish to send their children to an integrated school. Council would support this view but we must emphasise that it is essential that parents and pupils are free to choose other forms of education as they wish.

Ballymoney Community Resource Centre

Ballymoney Community Resource Centre
For the community, by the community, with the community.

Submission to The Education Committee in relation to Shared/Integrated Education on behalf of the Ballymoney Community Resource Centre, Community Education Steering Group.

Ballymoney Community Resource Centre Community Education Steering Group met on 02.10.14 to discuss and contribute towards the inquiry response into Integrated/Shared Education. The BCRC Community Education Steering Group was initially formed to Those groups represented included Causeway Older People's Strategy Team (COAST) which was represented by Mary McCusker, Integrated Education Fund (IEF) was represented by Eleanor Kyle, Coleraine Education Community Project (CECP was represented by Paul McLernon), Focus on Family was represented by Brendan Patterson, Millburn Community Association was represented by Billy Eilis and Ballymoney Community Resource Centre was represented by Angela Mulholland.

The guidelines for the Inquiry are The Education Committee will:

■ Review the nature and definition of Shared Education and Integrated Education as it applies across all educational phases – including consideration for the need for a formal statutory definition and obligation in statute to facilitate and encourage Shared Education.

■ Identify the key barriers and enablers for Shared Education and Integrated Education.

■ Identify and analyse alternative approaches and models of good practice in other jurisdictions in terms of policy interventions and programmes.

■ Consider what priorities and actions need to be taken to improve sharing and integration – including the effectiveness of the relevant parts of the CRED policy; the need to engage more effectively with parents/carers; and the role of Special Schools.

■ Report to the Assembly on its findings and recommendation by Spring 2015.

The Committee agreed to set the deadline for submissions to the Inquiry as 24 October 2014

Here is the following contribution and record of discussion from the scheduled meeting.

Two local Grammar Schools within the town of Coleraine were discussed (The Coleraine High School and The Coleraine Institute and it was stated that where a student attending these schools comes from can and does have a detrimental effect on their overall life experience within the education system. It was felt that the role of Community Education has to deal with the effect of this behaviour and that sometimes this form of education is the only route out of deprivation and low self esteem for not only the young people concerned but also for parents and adults alike.

It was recognised that there is a lot more support for students within the Primary School model and the Ballysally Nurturing Programme was held up as a model of best practice as most of the support is facilitated on a one to one basis, however once students reach secondary school level this support is seen to be delivered more on a speed dating level. Participants agreed that collaboration is important and vital to ensuring sustainability for programmes and projects alike. A current example of best practice in collaboration is the current programme Coleraine Education Community Project (CECP) which was set up in April 2010 in collaboration with ten of the schools and nurseries in the Coleraine N. R. Areas. Although this funding is only up to March 2015, it was agreed that programmes like CECP and it's Vision to build bridges between Coleraine schools and the communities they serve, to help families access opportunities, to realise their potential, and develop stronger,

independent and confident communities are vital to sustaining the concept of both Integrated and Shared Education.

It was recognised that there are at present 62 grant-aided integrated schools in Northern Ireland (with a total enrolment of 21,500 pupils, or 7 percent of total pupils in 2012/13), made up of 38 grant-maintained integrated schools and 24 controlled integrated schools. This result is still relatively low and needs to be addressed. However it was agreed very strongly that this issue has to be addressed however not at the expense of the standard of education for any student.

In relation to formal education it was stated that mature students were not made to feel particularly welcome whereas within the Community Education platform, everyone was made to feel welcome. This then led to a discussion on why kids are leaving both Primary School and indeed Secondary School levels with little or no qualifications. It was recognised that the concept of Integrated/Shared Education needs to get into the heart of the programme in the home. The home environment has to change and be part of Integrated Education and the concept of Working Class Kids getting Working Class Jobs has to be challenged. Just because there is no history of someone in the family not having achieved or having gone to University, should not be the same aspiration of the young people growing up within those areas. It was noted that particularly within the Millburn Estate 30% of the kids attending the school are from the estate, therefore this creates in itself an opportunity for integration amongst young people from different areas in Coleraine and wider afield. This also creates an opportunity for schools within the Neighbourhood Renewal to interact and take part in programmes designed to promote integration and shared learning.

Ballysally
Churchlands } | NR Areas |
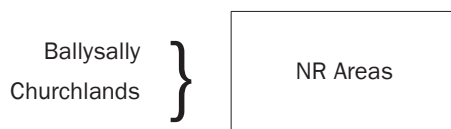
Community Education can provide a platform within Neighbourhood Renewal areas for both Integrated Education and Shared Education. The role of the Community Networks/Community Groups and Associations is to co-ordinate and deliver what is needed on the ground. The role of Community Education should not be about any personal agenda but should be about the participants and those availing of the courses and objectives. The concept of a natural/ shared space is at the core of Community Education. People need to feel safe, free from barriers and any special needs also need to be addressed. The discussion returned to the question of why is the current education system not working? Why are young people leaving without qualifications? The concept of working for yourself/learning apprenticeship skills and opportunities to start social enterprises that address real social issues can all be achieved through the medium of community education with a strong focus on integration and shared learning. It was also recognised that within different communities, engaging with parents is vital to continuing the concept of integrated and shared education.

Models of Good Practice were then discussed, The Aspire Programme in particular.

Aspire is a collaboration of local grass-roots community groups operating in the Coleraine area. Currently there are five core Aspire members with a much wider support from other local partners. Part of Aspire's remit is to deliver relevant community-based training (accredited and non-accredited) for the benefit of local communities. What has tended individual groups within areas will have Training/Programme Workers as paid employees whose main role is to generate programmes and participants to attend that individual group. Where Aspire aims to be different is by providing a genuine beneficiary-led approach to programme delivery - this means identification of local need and then provision of programmes to meet that need. As all the groups under Aspire are working towards the same goal, it means that where the programmes are delivered and by whom is largely irrelevant so long as the beneficiaries are getting what they need and the programmes are of the required quality to meet those needs.

This approach to integrated education puts the learner at the centre of the process as opposed to the more traditional approach of specific centres trying to attract people and courses solely within the confines of their own work. The expected result of this work will be that as well as the individual beneficiary gaining the skills, qualifications and learning that they desire, furthermore local organisations will develop genuine partnership working in terms of future delivery of programmes and services. The long-term aim of Aspire is to have a Programme Officer, working centrally and not aligned to any particular group. This role would involve identifying educational and training needs within local and wider communities and then engaging participants in programmes that are already running in the local area, or where there are gaps in programme delivery provision, setting up these programmes in partnership with the most relevant local delivery partner in the area. It is anticipated that this approach will provide a far more enhanced service for local beneficiaries than the current competitive arena that aims to secure participants for isolated courses.

Another approach that Aspire is taking is to ensure that access to relevant programmes and courses is accessible for all so there is a major emphasis on roles that encourage participation through person-centred, relationship-developing, pre-programme support. Given the barriers to education, whether through prior negative experiences from formal education processes or through the wide variety of other causes (family commitments, social isolation, lack of confidence, fear, lack of transport and other resources, etc), the aim of Aspire is to work alongside people to gently remove these barriers, resulting in the right stage and time where the individual feels comfortable and motivated to commit to a programme of learning, either formal or informal.

We all have a responsibility to our young people? There is a real challenge out there to keep skills within our own area, to ensure a vibrant and sustainable community for the future. Community Education helps to break the class issue down within the education system. It was generally agreed that the cost of uniforms were too dear, particularly when you have four or five children to send out at the start of each term. The concept of discrimination was also discussed and on how we measure success? It was generally agreed that valuing apprenticeships and focusing on opportunities to develop social enterprises was the way forward.

Submissions should be made by email to committee.education@niassembly.gov.uk

Beacon, P – Concerned Parent

The real inquiry should be into why LISNASKEA HIGH SCHOOL was closed when it was already doing a 3 year partnership with other ccms schools in the area.

This is so sad now when it is going to be made mainstreamed. It is definitely a good idea, it is a good chance for all children getting a chance to learn together.

My daughter was at Lisnaskea High when it closed last year, she decided to go to an integrated school, and total loves it. It is well organised and there is no fuss made by different religions . All are treated equal, which is the way it should be,

Phyllis Beacon

Beacon, P – Concerned Parent

BELB

CM/GMcM

7 November 2014

Mr Peter McCallion
Committee for Education
Room 375, Parliament Buildings
Ballymiscaw
Stormont
BELFAST
BT4 3XX

Dear Peter

Shared and Integrated Education

Further to your letter dated 10 September 2014, please find attached, the Belfast board's response to your request for written evidence, which was approved at the board meeting on Thursday 6 November 2014.

Yours sincerely

C. Mangan.

**Dr Clare Mangan
Chief Executive**

Enc

**Direct telephone line – 028 9056 4041
Fax – 028 9043 9861
E-mail address – Clare.Mangan@belb.co.uk**

Belfast Education and Library Board, 40 Academy Street, Belfast BT1 2NQ Website: www.belb.org.uk
Telephone: 028 9056 4000 • Fax: 028 9033 1714 • Email: info@belb.co.uk • RNID Typetalk: 18001 028 9056 4000

611

Towards a Learning City

Belfast Education and Library Board

Response to a request for written evidence on Shared/Integrated Education inquiry made by Northern Ireland

Assembly Committee for Education.

October 2014

Shared/Integrated Education inquiry

The Committee for Education is undertaking an Inquiry into Shared/Integrated Education. The terms of reference for the Committee's Inquiry are set out below.

The Committee will:

■ Review the nature and definition of Shared Education and Integrated Education across all educational phases – including consideration of the need for a formal statutory definition and an obligation in statute to facilitate and encourage Shared Education;

■ Identify the key barriers and enablers for Shared Education and Integrated Education;

■ Identify and analyse alternative approaches and models of good practice in other jurisdictions in terms of policy interventions and programmes;

■ Consider what priorities and actions need to be taken to improve sharing and integration – including the effectiveness of the relevant parts of the CRED policy; the need to engage more effectively with parents/carers; and the role of Special Schools; and

■ Report to the Assembly on its findings and recommendations by Spring 2015.

Introduction

Section 1

Belfast Education and Library Board

The Belfast Education and Library Board was established in 1973 and from this date has made significant contribution to the changing educational landscape of Belfast through innovative, creative and dynamic initiatives and support in education and youth contexts.

As the local authority the board:

- takes account of the need to provide pre-school education;

- ensures that there is adequate provision for pupils of compulsory school age;

- makes suitable provision for children who have been identified as having special education needs; and

- contributes to the moral, spiritual, cultural, intellectual and physical development of the community.

The board also secures the provision of adequate facilities for recreational, social, physical, cultural and youth activities and of other services ancillary to education.

The Belfast Education and Library Board is committed to providing a quality education and youth service which contributes to life-long learning for all the people of Belfast. As an education and library board we provide services to all school sectors at all levels – controlled, maintained, voluntary, Irish medium and integrated sectors. As a board we have a proven record of supporting schools programmes that have involved young people and schools engaging in shared education.

Section 2

Response to the terms of reference

2.1   Review the nature and definition of Shared Education and Integrated Education across all educational phases – including consideration of the need for a formal statutory definition and an obligation in statute to facilitate and encourage Shared Education.

Comment:

1.   Educational bodies and institutions will have their own definition and understanding of shared education based on their individual contexts. BELB believes that a clear and concise definition of Shared Education that is understood and shared by all is an important starting point for dialogue and development of a holistic approach to a system wide definition of shared education programmes. A clear nomenclature around shared education should help to facilitate understanding and help to allay misconceptions.

2.   Recent definitions include:

- 'Shared education involves two or more schools or other educational institutions from different sectors working in collaboration with the aim of delivering educational benefits to learners, promoting the efficient and effective use of resources, and promoting equality of opportunity, good relations, equality of identity, respect for diversity and community cohesion.' *(Minister's terms of reference and accepted by the Ministerial Advisory Group).*

- 'Working definition: shared education refers to schools from different sectors working together in a sustained process ranging from two or more schools making shared use of specialist facilities, through to coordinated timetabling, and pupils taking classes across a network of schools.' *(Professor Colin Knox University of Ulster).*

- 'Shared education involves young people from diverse backgrounds learning together, enabling them to recognise and value diversity and develop higher levels of mutual understanding. It refers to methodologies and environments where pupils interact by sharing, building on and widening one another's knowledge, skills and experiences and beginning to reconcile differences to promote a shared future. Shared education is more than just a shared space.' *(A Final Evaluation of the International Fund for Ireland's Sharing in Education Programme 2013).*

3.   Each of these definitions highlight key aspects of shared education:

1.   It is important that the definition indicates that Shared Education is not solely about promoting equality of opportunity, good relations, equality of identity, respect for diversity and community cohesion (important as they are) but also emphasizes (first and foremost) that it is about delivering educational benefits to learners as highlighted in the Ministerial Advisory Group definition. The wider evidential research demonstrates clearly that collaboration between schools can play a significant role in terms of school improvement, related to:

- pupil performance (attainment, engagement, motivation and behaviour)

- teacher development (motivation, morale, practice enhanced skills relationships)

- leadership economic improvements (sharing resources) http://www.schoolsworkingtogether.co.uk/reports.html.

This explicit link to learning in part should go some way to reassuring schools and parents about the fundamental purpose of shared education.

2.   It is to an extent a given that it involves schools from different sectors working together, however within the historical context of Northern Ireland this is often taken to mean schools/pupils from a Protestant and Catholic background. Given the greater diversity of pupils in NI schools from different religious and cultural backgrounds any definition should reflect this, similar to the Sharing in Education Programme definition. Possibly cognisance should be taken to the fact that there is increasing diversity between schools from the same sector.

3.   A definition of shared education should also indicate that shared education is not simply about a 'one off' event, a series of activities/events or lessons but rather is a sustained process to embed approaches/strategies (whole school approach) as indicated by Professor Colin Knox.

4.   Any definition needs to reflect the changing composition of society and the increasing diversity of the population in Northern Ireland. We are living in an increasingly multicultural society and there is much work to be done to achieve respectful and welcoming relationships with people from different cultures. Shared education needs to be about more than the two main communities. Globalisation has demonstrated the interconnectedness of people's lives around the world.

2.2   Identify the key barriers and enablers for Shared Education and Integrated Education.

Comment:

Enablers

1.   There needs to be clear and committed leadership to the values and principles of shared education from the Board of Governors, principal and senior leadership team. (whole school approach). This should be linked to appropriate professional development to ensure staff are trained and developed.

2.   The Northern Ireland Curriculum provides a sound foundation through a broad and balanced curriculum with opportunities in areas such as PDMU, Local and Global

Citizenship and other aspects of Learning for Life and Work, for pupils to address issues such as race, gender, diversity etc. (section 75 categories). All subject strands but in particular, Religious Education, History, Geography, English, Languages, Drama and Art and Design provide opportunities for teachers to develop curriculum experiences that explore identity, diversity and promote reconciliation, developing the attitudes and dispositions. However, some aspects can be lost when 'educational performance' becomes an overriding factor. (Blocker - many of these areas in the former group are often allocated less curricular time).

3. A fully resourced and sustained programme of continuing professional development for governors, school leaders, and teachers to support, develop, promote best practice and identify next practice in the NIC.

4. Comment could be made in ETI inspection reports on schools with existing 'shared education' elements active in the school whether through formalised programmes, curriculum provision, extracurricular provision or community links. Highlighting effective practice.

5. The education and library boards (education authority) as part of its work with schools could identify and disseminate effective practice.

6. Schools and organisations could evaluate consistently the impact of the work of reconciliation on the young people's attitudes, behaviours, understanding and skills to be able to demonstrate clearly the progress of young people and to inform future planning.

7. When compiling future school development plans that targets relating to "Shared Education" priorities are identified and detailed. This could relate to point 6 above.

8. The work of the Area Learning Communities could be extended and developed to include a greater focus on shared education. A similar approach could be extended to primary schools (Primary Area Learning Communities).

9. A more collaborative/partnership and focused approach between the education and library boards and schools at induction/early professional development and continuing professional development to ensure high quality professional development opportunities that encourage teachers and support bodies learning and sharing together.

10. Collaborative approach between the school(s), parents, local community groups, statutory bodies in developing programmes which are contextualised and develop out of local community and school's needs. For example, since the late 1990s Edenderry Nursery and Holy Cross Nursery have established a model of collaboration in education across an interface area in North Belfast. The project runs exchange days/play days between schools. This involves a full class from each school travelling to spend a day in the other school. The programme is focused on enabling children to meet and play with their 'buddies' and the day runs like any other with children engaging in circle time, play, story time etc. A joint parents' programme is delivered in tandem with this. Parents participate jointly in cross community workshops, cookery programmes, parenting programmes, arts and craft activities etc within both nursery settings.

11. The confidence of parents and pupils

    ■ Pupils and their parents need to be absolutely confident that the sharing arrangements will work for their pupils. Where there are shared arrangements, pupils and their parents must be kept well informed about the opportunities available through sharing, arrangements for monitoring progress, meeting teachers and so on. The arrangement needs to be underpinned by Service Level Agreements,

robust protocols and shared policies relating to key areas of shared educational experience.

12.   The strength and quality of the partnership is a crucial enabler. Shared education will flourish in a strong partnership where:

■ each partner feels equal and is confident of the purpose, worth and value of their own institution and of the contribution it can make to the success of the partnership;

■ history, ethos and value system in each school is understood and respected;

■ Shared resources, such as a teacher;

■ Building capacity, Board of Governors, principals and teachers;

■ Planning together (teachers).

13.   All area based plans should also give cognisance/reflect a degree of shared education campuses.

14.   School development proposals should have a section to indicate how the proposal will contribute to shared education.

15.   Shared education placements between initial teacher education Institutions to enable student teachers to spend an 'extended' time (or) take part of their course in another institution.

16.   Modelling of 'Good Practice' in shared education principles across the education sectors – increasing collaboration between the education support bodies.

Barriers

1.   Work may be needed in persuading schools that Shared Education programmes/ sharing campuses will lead to real and measurable improvements in the quality of education that they provide and in raising educational achievement among their pupils.

2.   Depending on the extent and nature of shared education, some schools may perceive it as a threat to their 'identity'/'ethos.' In Northern Ireland there is a very strong 'loyalty' factor to the school attended.

3.   With changing demographics, schools have concerns about falling rolls and this has to a certain extent placed some schools in 'competition' with each other for pupil places. This may mitigate to the extent as to how far some schools may feel they could share and collaborate.

4.   More beneficial if all participating schools share the one overall school site. By doing so you will greatly reduce potential transport, budgetary, supervision and timetabling issues.

5.   Parental Support - It is essential that parents have totally bought into the proposed partnership and fully understand the process and intended learning outcomes. The process needs to be transparent.

6.   Collaboration between schools attended mostly by children and young people from affluent backgrounds and schools attended mostly by young people from less affluent backgrounds may also present a challenge in terms of finding common ground.

7.   Variability among schools in terms of educational outcomes may also present a barrier. For example, if there are two post-primary schools (either grammar or non-grammar) situated in the same locality, and one is a much 'higher achieving' school than the other, there may be a reluctance on the part of parents, teachers and senior

management in the 'higher achieving' school for pupils from the two schools to learn together in case this has a detrimental impact on pupils' educational attainment.

8. Funding may be identified by schools and other establishments as a major factor affecting whether a school can establish or maintain a shared education initiative. Initiatives may be programme-funded and therefore may only have a certain lifespan, and schools may therefore have to find other avenues in order to maintain provision.

9. A number of practical considerations may mitigate against some schools fully engaging in shared education programmes/initiatives, for example:

   ■ accountability for pupil outcomes;

   ■ timetabling issues;

   ■ travel time between schools;

   ■ safety and transportation issues;

   ■ parental consent;

   ■ staff time and resources;

   ■ some schools may perceive that other schools benefit more than they do;

   ■ Staff time and resources.

2.3 Identify and analyse alternative approaches and models of good practice in other jurisdictions in terms of policy interventions and programmes.

Comment:

1. Significant work has already been undertaken in this area in identifying and analysing models of Shared Education, for example, 'Education and a Shared future. Options for sharing and collaboration in Northern Ireland schools.'(O'Sullivan. O'Flynn and Russell. http://www.schoolsworkingtogether.co.uk/documents/education-and-ashared-future. pdf). As a Board we recognise the implications of such reports for the support we provide to schools across all sectors.

2.4 Consider what priorities and actions need to be taken to improve sharing and integration – including the effectiveness of the relevant parts of the CRED policy; the need to engage more effectively with parents/carers; and the role of Special Schools.

Comment:

1. The Advancing Shared Education document (2013) states one of the values that stem from the definition of shared education is:

   "An emphasis on developing the whole child so that they have a strong sense of their own identity and an understanding and respect for others and that they are able to develop a wide range of knowledge and skills to enable them to make a full and positive contribution to building a prosperous, open, diverse and inclusive society".

2. This is closely related to the key objectives of the CRED policy (2011) which are:

■ ensure that learners, at each stage of their development, have an understanding of and respect for the rights, equality and diversity of all without discrimination;

■ educate children and young people to live and participate in a changing world, so that they value and respect difference and engage positively with it, taking account of the ongoing intercommunity divisions arising from conflict and increasing diversity within our society; and

■ equip children and young people with the skills, attitudes and behaviours needed to develop mutual understanding and recognition of, and respect for, difference.

3. The CRED policy advocates a long term, meaningful, cross-curricular approach to Community Relations, Equality and Diversity. While curricular areas such as PDMU, Local and Global Citizenship and Learning for Life and Work already provide a framework which enables teaching and learning relating to these areas to be examined and developed the CRED policy encourages all educational settings to recognise how others curricular areas such as History, World Around Us, Literacy, Music and The Arts can also complement and extend this learning.

4. The delivery of training to Teachers, Youth Workers and Board of Governors has been a central element of this policy. This training ensures that staff has the knowledge, resources and confidence to develop the Policy within their school setting. Fundamental to the success will be the delivery of a platform of training programmes which ensure a co-ordinated approach which celebrates and learns from best practice. CRED is not currently embedded within initial teacher training however it would be important that is developed as we move forwards with any training relating to Shared Education or CRED.

5. The further development of links with community groups, specialist organisations and parents/carers has been a key aspect of the CRED policy which is very closely embedded within the Shared Education philosophy.

6. The CRED enhancement funding scheme has enabled schools to access resources to assist them to provide meaningful opportunities for groups of children and young people to engage with one another, develop their knowledge and skills and allow them to examine their values and beliefs. Shared Education will enable pupils to engage in learning in a shared classroom however a priority must still be given to ensuring children and young people have the opportunity to develop an understanding and appreciation of the diverse society existing in Northern Ireland. The allocation of additional funding and dedicated support officers to enable this is something which has proven beneficial as part of CRED and is worthy of consideration within the development of Shared Education.

7. The CRED Policy is nearing the end of its initial 3 year business plan. While it is still essentially a recent policy which many schools and early years settings are still adapting to and developing it has resulted in large number of staff attending Community Relations, Equality and Diversity Training, the collection and development of support resources, the allocation of funding and the celebration of examples of best practice. Future developments relating to both CRED and Shared Education may benefit for the establishment of policy links or shared practice.

8. There is a need to widen pupils' horizons and ways of thinking beyond local contexts. The development of cultural awareness, dialogue and understanding is of central importance in preparing young people for adult life. This could be achieved through a variety of approaches, for example, through the uptake of programmes such as Young Social Innovators www.youngsocialinnovators.org. There is a need to embed a global dimension in the curriculum as this should lead to school communities developing greater awareness of the wider world and less stereotypical views about others.

Blackwater Integrated College

22 October 2014

Dear Mr McCallion

I am writing on behalf of the Board of Governors of Blackwater Integrated College in response to your request for written evidence with regard to Shared and Integrated Education.

Lagan College in Belfast and Shimna IC in Newcastle were oversubscribed and parents, in particular those whose children attended integrated primary schools, wanted to ensure the choice of integrated post-primary provision in the mid-down area. Rowallane IC opened in 2006 as an independent school, funded by the IEF. Unfortunately Rowallane did not receive government backing due mainly to the policy of proposals being considered in relation to likely impact on nearby schools, rather than in the light of parental demand. Undeterred in the second year of the school the parents sought another integrated option for their children.

Blackwater IC opened in September 2008 as the result of bringing together the independent school Rowallane Integrated College and the former Down Academy Controlled Integrated High School.

Blackwater IC is a school which operates in a building which is less than satisfactory. The current school was built for 250 pupils. If we were to meet our enrolment of 400 there would be serious health and safety issues! The lack of suitable facilities makes it more difficult to attract students.

I believe that Shared Education and Integrated Education are different. Integrated Education is full immersion sharing in which the children and young people are given the opportunity to learn about and from each other in their daily interactions. They learn to get to know each other as people and not as labels.

I have personal experience of shared education having attended a mixed school. The school was, however, single identity in its ethos and practice.

In addition, while working in the Controlled Sector, I was involved in a number of cross-community projects. While these displayed many examples of good practice and certainly had a worth and value, they had little, if any, long term impact.

Any legislation to support Shared Education must not be at the expense of Integrated Education. Integrated Education is more effective in bringing children and young people

Blackwater Integrated College PO Box 42 Downpatrick BT30 9WZ
T. 0845 388 6875 - E. info@blackwateric.org - www.blackwateric.org
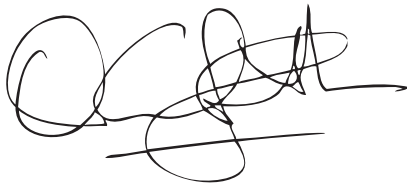
together and is more financially efficient than retaining separate schools with the resulting need to duplicate resources.

The key barriers to the growth of Integrated Education have been a weak political commitment due to our existing divided political system and the 'what we have we hold' mentality of so many educational institutions. It is significant that a Judicial Review was needed to clarify the Department's statutory duty and to remind the Minister to fulfil it.

Educating our children together from a young age gives the opportunity for education to heal division. It is time to find a sustainable way to bring children and young people together if we are to work "together, building a united community". Integrated Education as the norm for our children and young people provides an excellent model.

Yours sincerely

Dr Olwen Griffith
Principal

Bridge Integrated Primary School

Sir

As the Principal of Bridge Integrated Primary School, I feel it is appropriate for me to make a written response to the Committee. I have worked in Bridge IPS for 20 years and have had the privilege of being Principal in our school since 2005. Having grown up in a Catholic family and having attended Maintained schools, I was struck forcefully on entering the integrated school system, by the passion of the parents, staff and governors who led to its creation and maintained and encouraged its growth. This continues to be the case today.

Integrated Education inspires and achieves quality education alongside quality contact for the children who attend our schools. Our pupils are immersed in an ethos of respect for one another's communities from the outset of their attendance and from this grows curiosity and genuine interest in one another, without a need to suspiciously or negatively compare the beliefs, practices and cultures of a classmate or colleague. Friendships grow beyond the classroom and into the communities in which we live. Barriers, often formed through ignorance or as a result of community pressure, begin to be broken down and our pupils bring home a new message – that we can break the mould!

Shared education is a start – but must not be the end. It is imperative that fully fledged integrated schools, which are desired by parents, are allowed to grow and are facilitated and encouraged by the Department of Education. Shared education is a model of partial contact and this is not enough if the communities in our country are to grow in knowledge and trust of one another.

With thanks for your consideration of my comments.

Teresa Devlin

Bullick, E Retired Teacher

The Northern Ireland Assembly's Education Committee Inquiry into Shared and Integrated Education

A Personal Journey

Although now retired my teaching career included 14 years as principal of a controlled primary school with 120 pupils, two years as an EMU Development Officer with a local ELB and 16 years as principal of an urban integrated primary school with 365 pupils. I hold an MA in Peace and Conflict Resolution Studies.

During my time working in EMU I had the opportunity to host a Danish headteacher on an exchange programme. In Denmark the vast majority of pupils are simply enrolled in the local community school nearest to their home. At the end of his stay he wrote the following:

> "I find that here in NI you separate your children on almost every conceivable pretext. You send them to different schools based on age, ability, gender, religion, social class and more recently based on preferred language. If we were to introduce such a system back in my own country I fear that children might grow up to be suspicious or ignorant of each other. They might even grow up to hate each other. In a country where inter-communal mistrust is so prevalent I cannot understand why you would wish to take such profound risks with each new generation of impressionable young people."

This would not be an uncommon view. Our neighbours in Europe can see only too clearly what we apparently cannot see for ourselves. If an education system artificially separates groups of children during their most formative years they will indeed grow up in a state of ignorance and will be grossly ill-prepared for life in a dual–cultural or pluralist society.

We have provided and nurtured a system which has allowed vested interests groups and individual institutions to put their aspirations ahead of the needs of young people. We devise elaborate schemes to bring young people together through sporting and cultural initiatives yet we ignore the elephant in the room – our almost exclusively divided school system.

Each August we salve our collective conscience when we extol the virtues of our high achievers yet conveniently ignore the fact that our lowest achievers are amongst the poorest anywhere in Europe.

The Problem: Segregated Education

I departed the controlled primary sector because I became convinced that we were doing a disservice to our children. Year on year we were turning out pupils who were indeed numerate, literate and IT competent but who had no knowledge whatsoever about the other eleven year olds who were simultaneously leaving the maintained primary on the other side of the town. Education has to be about more than mere academic performance. It must also be about how we behave towards our fellow man and how we relate to him/her. Institutional separation denies pupils the opportunity to build meaningful relationships with their neighbours and it is therefore harmful to society.

The Solutioins

For the past thirty years there has been a growing awareness of the detrimental effect of segregation and tentative solutions have been sought.

(i) EMU

In the decade 1985 – 1995 many EMU projects were lightweight, unsustainable and unsustained. There was insufficient contact for trust to build amongst either staff or students

so little benefit was achieved. Some of the better quality EMU projects however were akin to Shared Education in that they involved sustained twice weekly contact between classes over a lengthy period. At the end of the decade however the majority of initiatives were judged it to have been expensive experiments and logistically too complex to sustain. Teachers who had been responsible for so much additional planning were relieved when they could return to normal i.e. simply planning their own curriculum for their own students.

(ii) Shared Education

Despite its laudable objectives this initiative has to date only involved a tiny minority of students. Even if expansion were deemed a priority too few schools are currently physically close enough for shared education to take place. Buses travelling back and forth between schools is both a unwarranted expense and a logistical nightmare. Children apparently working collaboratively yet wearing different uniforms simply highlights the contrived nature of the exercise.

Schools are already complex institutions and teaching is already a stressful occupation. Combining groups of students for varying periods of time with different staff on different sites only adds to the complexity of the educational process. It may certainly be possible for some extra –curricular activities and it is certainly feasible at 6th Form but for the vast majority of students in the majority of schools meaningful Shared Education will not be achievable.

(iii) Integrated Education

The obvious solution is integrated education. Frustrated at the lack of government action parents took the initiative and created the current planned integrated school movement. Parents recognised that it takes sustained contact over months and years to create the atmosphere necessary for trust and mutual understanding to develop and it is only fully integrated schools which can offer this maximum contact time.

Integrated schools are the most cost effective strategy for creating and sustaining contact - there is nothing artificial or contrived about integration. Integrated schools do not dilute ethos nor do they shy away from difficult issues. Staff in integrated schools work together as a single team finding solutions to everyday issues. Together they devise innovative solutions to contentious events – *such as the election of a new Pope or the birthday of the Queen.*

It is sad reflection on our political and church leaders that it was left to parents to establish such schools. The 1989 legislation clearly states that DE should **encourage and facilitate** integrated education. In my view all it done to date is to merely **permit** integrated education.

"I do not know of any measures which would prepare the way for a better feeling in Ireland than uniting children at an early age and bringing them up in the same school, leading them to commune with one another and to form those little intimacies and friendships which often subsist through life"

Dr James Doyle, Roman Catholic Bishop of Kildare and Leighlin , 1826

Almost two centuries on we have yet to recognise and deal with the travesty of segregation.

Eric H A Bullick   24th October 2014

Carr, A Concerned Parent

Dear Mr McCallion   24/10/14

I am writing in response to your request for written evidence with regard to Shared and Integrated Education. It surprises me greatly that 29 years since I, as a parent deeply committed to helping to create a society at peace, worked tirelessly and in a long term voluntary capacity to cultivate the first integrated primary school outside Belfast, All Children's Integrated Primary School, Newcastle, Co. Down and chaired the first meeting of a new parent's group to set in progress the development of Shimna Integrated College, next door, that there is so little understanding of the statutory duty to encourage and facilitate integrated education and the range of interventions to try and eliminate or drastically change the meaning of this duty.

Before I comment further on the areas of the inquiry which I can from deep commitment and personal experience contribute to, I share the story I wrote a few days ago for an up and coming publication about my journey.

All Children's Integrated Primary School, Newcastle, Co. Down, nestles at the foot of the Mourne Mountains behind the wall of what was originally a traditional Walled Garden, part of the Annesley Estate.

It would be hard to imagine a more perfect setting, the green of the forest and peaks of the hills on one side and the sweeping coastline of sea and sand on the other.

Today, 230 children, aged four to eleven, and reflecting the diversity of faith, culture and creed that is Northern Ireland, 2014, come together every day to learn, play, share and develop a caring understanding of one another.

And yet, All Children's only exists because a small group of dedicated parents and concerned friends came together in 1985. They were united in their belief that educating children together was important if Northern Ireland was to become a society at peace after so many years of violent conflict.

Anne Carr, is one of those founding parents and this is her story:

It was October 1985 when I read the small advertisement on the front page of our local paper, the Mourne Observer.

It invited all parents interesting in establishing a new integrated primary school in Newcastle, Co. Down, to a meeting in the community centre.

I had followed the news items on the group of parents who had a few years before established Lagan College and had been inspired by their determination and courage.

The mayhem of the "Troubles" had already deeply affected our lives in so many ways and as a young mother of three children, I was immediately drawn to the possibility of my children being educated locally with children of all faiths and none instead of the segregated education that was the norm.

I went to the meeting and found the room filled with parents from across our community divides, all passionate about the possibility of integrated education in our area.

The meeting was addressed by Belinda Loftus, a parent from Dundrum and representatives of the organisation All Children Together, a charitable group that had supported Lagan College in their endeavours and whose aim was to support parent groups interested in developing integrated schools in their areas.

I realised that the initial idea had come from a group of parents involved with Dundrum Community Association and led by Belinda, they had contacted the Board of Governors of Downshire Controlled Primary School in Dundrum to explore the possibility of it transforming to integrated status. They knew that pupil numbers in the school were dwindling and hoped that the idea of developing a planned shared school for the village might sustain its future. The request had been turned down so, still passionate about the development of integrated education in the area, they called upon the support of All Children Together and this meeting was organised to gauge wider support.

It was explained that a steering committee was required initially, to start to raise the funding required to get a school off the ground. The process was that All Children Together could provide a small grant to pay for administration, publicity and meeting costs and that they could also help with raising more substantial funds from charitable organisations around the word, interested in supporting the development of integrated education in Northern Ireland.

The reality was that funding from government sources would only be available when the school was up and running and considered viable and this could take at least one school year.

Despite the challenges, the enthusiasm of the people in the room was amazing and a steering committee was soon elected. The goal was to work towards the establishment of a new integrated primary and nursery school ready to open its doors to the first pupils in September 1986. I was appointed public relations officer that night and my journey with integrated education began.

It was only when we got down to the nitty gritty of the work involved that we realised what an enormous challenge we had set ourselves. If our school was to open in less than one year we had approx. £150,000.00 to raise, a school building to secure, teaching staff to appoint, classrooms to furnish, educational resources to source and most importantly, parents to sign up who would buy into our dream and enrol their children in our nursery and primary classes.

Whilst others got on with their area of development, I got on with sharing the dream - raising the profile of our plans, writing a monthly newsletter, writing articles for the local press, organising coffee mornings, meeting potential parents, sending letters to funders, getting as much publicity as possible.

The months flew by and slowly but surely the pupil numbers grew.

Our fundraisers proved an excellent way to engage potential parents and Belinda's efforts to secure educational charitable funds were successful and enough funding to hand we prepared to open our new school as planned.

The parent group met and decided on the name for our new school – All Children's Integrated Primary and Nursery School. The motto – "Harmony Through Understanding" was agreed and Steve Murphy, a founder parent and graphic artist designed the logo which depicted a dove of peace rising from an open book of knowledge. The first parents designed the uniform and decided that comfort and practicality would replace the normal shirt and tie uniform of the time in other schools. It would be a navy sweatshirt, short sleeved polo shirt and grey skirt or trousers. Trousers were accepted as the choice for both boys and girls if preferred.

It proved impossible to secure a building to house our new school so the only option was to rent a site in a local industrial area and buy second hand mobile classrooms.

It was all hands on deck preparing the land, bringing the mobiles on site, securing toilet facilities and tackling the internal and external painting of the classrooms, office area, kitchen, buying furniture and resources, much of which was second hand and hiring our teachers and ancillary staff.

As the 1st September, 1986 approached, time simply ran out and delays on the site meant that the school mobiles would not be ready. Emergency measures then and we were delighted

when the local St John's Church of Ireland church hall was made available to our group as initial temporary premises from which to run the school.

It was with immense pride that I watched our first pupils enter the gates of St John's Church Hall on 1st September 1986, the day All Children's Integrated Primary and Nursery School was born. There were 62 children on the role, a full nursery class, a combined Primary 1 – 3 class and a combined Primary 4 – 7 class.

My daughter Ashlee was one of the first Primary 1 pupils and my twin sons Darryl and Nathan were in Primary 5 and part of the combined Primary 4 – 7 class. (My youngest son Adam, born in 1988, was to enter the Reception Class in 1992.)

All Children's, the first fully integrated primary school outside the Belfast area had arrived and as PR officer I welcomed the world's press at the gates. Our opening was big and worldwide news. I did interviews with American, Australian and Japanese news crews. I travelled to Belfast to share our excitement and explain why we had developed the school to Wendy Austin on BBC Northern Ireland News and Gerry Kelly on UTV.

The school opened, we moved to a new phase of development. Settling into the mobile classrooms after three weeks in the temporary church hall, the much larger team of founder parents and friends, new parents, principal and teachers worked tirelessly to continue to raise the funds to keep the school going, develop the curriculum and at the same time ensure that the important ethos of sharing and developing understanding, parental involvement and child centred learning was at the heart of everything we planned.

Parental support was always crucial but in the early days it was volunteer parents who manned the school kitchen, made the lunches, did a lot of the maintenance and cleaning, led extra curriculum activities and continued to hold all sorts of fund raising events to raise much needed cash.

The pupils thrived, despite the often inclement weather and the reality of moving between mobile classrooms and a separate toilet block. Wellington boots were the answer for breaktime and outdoor play and the double size mobile became assembly hall, sports hall and classroom combined.

Enrolments grew steadily and the search for a permanent building to house our school continued. The lease on the industrial site was running out so it was a dream come true when we secured a piece of land, just off King Street, Newcastle to become our permanent home. The Annesley family in Newcastle owned the site and offered it to our governors at a significantly reduced price. It had been a traditional Walled Garden in the past and some of the old wall remained. It was on a magnificent setting between the Mourne Mountains and the sea and although in the interim it would house our rapidly deteriorating mobile classrooms, our long term vision was a new purpose built school on the site.

Two years after our school opened its doors, we were delighted to have been deemed a viable school by the Department of Education and awarded maintained status. This meant that our primary school's teacher salaries would be funded one hundred percent and seventy five percent of our running costs covered. We had still money to raise but significantly less than before and we as parents and staff celebrated our wonderful achievement.

The new school site was wonderful. We had space for many outdoor activities. A new school garden was developed and a large grassy area at the front was turned into an "All Ball Pitch". Two of the parents crafted goalposts which were suitable for soccer, gaelic football and rugby and our pupils enjoyed learning all three, a first for any school in the area at the time.

We made the most of the setting and a summer barbeque for parents, friends and pupils became an annual event and always incorporated a walk to the top of Slieve Donard led by mountaineering parents and a less strenuous walk to the top of Commedagh which often included mum's pushing buggys.

The development of our integrated school was not without its challenges. We had great community support but also faced the reality of those who saw our efforts as a threat to the status quo. It took many years to build relationships with some of the local churches and schools. Support from some of our political representatives was slow to develop. We had peaks and troughs in relation to pupil numbers, staffing and good relationships, some with the local education board and Department of Education took time to establish.

On 1st April, 1991, five years after the opening of All Children's Integrated Primary and Nursery School, we became the first Controlled Integrated Primary School in Northern Ireland enjoying full support and services provided by the South Eastern Education and Library Board. We closed the nursery school as it proved too expensive to continue and replaced it with a new Reception Class and our school was now fully funded in line with other schools in the area.

Thirteen years later, on 6th May 2004, after 18 long years in shabby mobile accommodation, and following a sustained, determined and at times fraught lobbying process, we moved into our new school. Our new school building is simply magnificent, nestled behind the Walled Garden with panoramic views of the Mourne Mountains. The bright and airy facilities are first class and pupils, staff and parents are thrilled to be afforded such a happy, safe and stimulating environment.

I came on board as a volunteer steering group member in 1985, progressed to become a trustee of the South Down Education Society, established to raise the funds to develop integrated education in the area, was a member of the parent's council and chaired the Board of Governors in total for just over fourteen years.

The successful development of All Children's became an everyday part of my life for over twenty years and like so many others involved, the journey we embarked on took determination, passion, perseverance and at times a backbone of steel.

I have said for a long time that integrated education may be just a baby step towards creating a fully shared and united community, at ease with difference but I firmly believe that it is a giant step in the right direction!

Now to contribute to the inquiry I offer the following:

■ Shared and Integrated Education are completely different. In recent years politicians have sought to sell shared education as a viable alternative to integrated education. It is not. Shared Education at its worst is apartheid education with Catholics going in one door, Protestants another. At best it allows pupils to share some time together but in essence, while better than nothing, it is similar to most CRED work. While there are some examples of good work, it is largely ineffective. Two of my children attended a local Catholic primary school for the first five years of their primary school life and despite this Catholic Maintained Primary and the local Controlled Primary being literally across a bridge over the river from one another there was no real engagement between the two. The idea that the CRED programme compares in any way is baffling as my children's experience was going to nice places with another school and not really getting to know the children at all. The good work evident in CRED happens every second of every minute of every day in Integrated schools. More importantly, as the interaction is ongoing and a natural part of daily life, rather than artificial and forced, it IS effective in that the friendships and bonds are developed on an ongoing basis.

■ It is the ethos of Integrated Education which so many fail to understand. I have faced the naysayers, those who say integrated schools were developed to satisfy the needs of middle class parents whose children couldn't pass the transfer test. So many of these people I found had never set foot in an integrated, and my term, PLANNED shared school, where parents deeply committed to creating an inclusive society gave years and years of their time to create something new and special.

■ We have been made aware that a definition of shared education as opposed to integrated education was provided to Mr Justice Treacy as part of the court proceedings surrounding Drumragh. Why seek a legal obligation to facilitate Shared Education when our assembly, MLAs and educational bodies have ignored and avoided a legal obligation to develop Integrated Education. In fact, since, the Good Friday Agreement Integrated Education has been capped and suppressed. Having been an active member of the Northern Ireland Women's Coalition who along with my colleague Jane Morrice, actually wrote the clause into the final draft of the Belfast/Good Friday Agreement around Integrated Education and mixed housing I can assure you that there was no confusion. Fully integrated, planned shared schools is what we meant, not "integrating" schools or "shared education". This was voted on by our people and passed at Referendum, and as we know this is an International Agreement, no cherry picking, the legal obligations are clear and concise. Seeking a legal obligation to promote 'Shared Education' is just another excuse to **continue to avoid an existing legal obligation to promote Integrated Education**. Do we live in a democracy or a dictatorship? Any legislation underpinning Shared Education must not be to the detriment of Integrated Education which is more effective and financially efficient at achieving the shared aims. Rather it should demand 'shared practice' within the segregated sectors where they exist. This is the way forward. Fully Integrated education and all kinds of sharing practices as well.

■ The key barrier for Integrated Education is the 'what we have we hold/no change' mentality of those in power and those working within the segregated sectors of education. Integrated schools have been actively prevented from growing so as not to negatively impact on neighbouring segregated schools. I have been at meetings for years and years with local and national politicians who have described integrated education as 'artificial, false and forced'. They have no knowledge of integrated education, no understanding of it and no desire to either. They fear it because Integrated Education is the only effective means of bringing about real positive change. With thirty years of experience the established integrated sector inc NICIE & IEF and existing Integrated Schools is the only body capable of facilitating it. The biggest barrier to Integrated Education is the existing divided political and educational system that needs a divided society to survive. Integrated Education would heal that division. Add the disgraceful behaviour that I as one parent have been subjected to by various churches and the discrimination which still exists where Catholic children and their parents are still in some cases shunned and not afforded the same pastoral care as other children in the parish.

■ Vested interest knows no bounds.

■ **Other jurisdictions have come to the Integrated Sector to learn from the model of existing good practice in Northern Ireland**. It speaks volumes that our politicians ignore the obvious answer on their doorstep to seek something else. Why on earth would you look at practice elsewhere and ignore the established practice within our own integrated sector that is seen as a benchmark of good practice? I for one have spent thirty years of my life sharing with others from all over the world, talking to parents here, trying to explain the journey in integrated education that I have taken and helping everyone to understand better what we as parents, and remember this is an education system that parents have driven. Does the education committee at Stormont have a reason for failing to recognise the integrated sector's thirty years of knowledge and expertise? It is beyond belief that the ELBs, are tasked with CRED when they have sought to maintain their status as a single ELB rather than potentially dilute their identity within ESA while the bodies with real knowledge and expertise are sidelined (eg NICIE). When I officially opened our new school building in Newcastle, the then Chief Executive of the South Eastern Education Board, Jackie Fitsimmons, talked of my passion, my knowledge of creating ease with difference and my perseverance in standing my ground in the face of unbelieveable opposition coming from a range of statutory bodies and politicians. He talked about me not understanding the meaning of the word "No" and considering the magnificent achievement

that is All Children's, he hoped that I would never learn the meaning of that word "No". I can assure you that I never will because right always triumphs vested interest.

■ **CRED programmes and many others like it, are helpful. Every intervention in segregation is important**. Having read about a dissemination of 'outstanding' practice for CRED last year it is no wonder why Northern Ireland is and will remain a divided society. The best facilitators had extensive work experience with NICIE yet NICIE was not part of the process. The outcomes of best practice were minimal and those identified happen every second of every minute of every day in integrated schools. It is what planned, shared integration is all about. Bringing all that is special about every single child into the classroom and working with it. Engaging parents and all levels of our school community, teaching and ancillary staff, friends. Celebrating diversity in a real way, every day. Providing safe enough spaces for the most contentious issues to be explored together and working out how best to make room for all.

■ You cannot make a school integrated by simply changing its title/name and artificially forcing pupils together. Integrated schools have a unique ethos and practice. I have personal experience of education boards, obviously seeing the threat of a new parent group exploring integration in their area, targeting small Controlled schools to transform to integrated status. The transformation process is very important and in reality probably takes about ten years to be working effectively and for all the right reasons. Transformation should not be for limited, survival reasons. Long term commitment, willingness to change root and branch practice and buy in to a new and inclusive ethos is organic and complex. A Controlled School is not already an integrated school, something I have heard so many times, particularly from some political representatives.

■ As so well written by the late Frank Wright, in his booklet on integrated education twenty years ago, Northern Ireland has British and Irish schools. Controlled schools support a British ethos and Catholic Maintained Schools support an Irish ethos. This permeates all areas of school life including sporting, music, after school activities etc and various emphasis in the everyday curriculum. We have definitely seen some excellent crossover activities and much more inclusion of new peoples and all the richness they bring to the school environment but basically this reality continues.

It is so important that you seek the views of all sectors. It is vital that you engage with the segregated sectors to ascertain the barriers to shared education, the effectiveness of any shared practice and the limits within the current structures.

If you ask a question you must be prepared to listen to the answer. If you want to be informed about Integrated Education you **must talk to the integrated sector**. If you want to bring about change you need to listen to the integrated sector. If you want to continue to promote division, continue to ignore it, sideline it and suppress it.

I hope this inquiry genuinely intends to listen to all the voices, passionate about our children and their education here. I would welcome the opportunity to meet with the committee to elaborate more fully on the points I have made above. I attended a controlled secondary school in the Greater Shankill area of Belfast in the sixties, my husband attended a Catholic Maintained Secondary school in North Belfast, two of my children attended a Catholic Maintained Primary for five years, a Catholic Grammar School for 5 years and a Voluntary Grammar School for A Levels. My younger two children have had an education in All Children's Integrated Primary School, Lagan College and Shimna College.

I am a committed dialogue practitioner having engaged our people in years of focussed conversations and sharing and learning processes for the last thirty years. I am passionate about our need to create real ease with difference, learn from the past and create a truly shared and caring society for future generations.

Yours sincerely
Anne Carr

Carrickfergus College

Submission from the Governors and Staff of Carrickfergus College to the Committee for Education Stormont

………………..

Shared/Integrated Education Inquiry

Carrickfergus College

bestp

This submission is being made on behalf of the Governors and staff of Carrickfergus College.

A   Factual Information.

1. Carrickfergus College has a total school population of 650 pupils when this submission is being written in July 2014.

2. Of those pupils, 122 indicate that they are of "No Religion", "Roman Catholic", "Other Christian" or are "Unclassified" in their religious affiliation. As a percentage that comes to 18.76% of the school population. Details available on "E" Schools.

3. The makeup of the borough in which Carrickfergus College sits would be overwhelmingly Protestant/Loyalist, which makes the profile of the College even more remarkable. Its feeder schools would again be reflective of this tradition making it likely that the College would have a very small non- Protestant pupil body.

B   Issues/Concerns/Barriers

1. The Governors and Staff of Carrickfergus College have tried for several years to get funding for a variety of shared education projects but have been deemed ineligible as they were unable to partner with a school locally which represented the "other"/ "minority" tradition. Carrickfergus has no Maintained Post Primary School. Such projects would have allowed Carrickfergus College to progress its desire to have a new build, better resources and enhanced teaching facilities.

2. The Governors and Staff feel that with the profile of pupils in the school they go a long way to already being a shared education school welcoming to pupils of any religion or none.

3. The Governors and Staff of Carrickfergus College are concerned that by a quirk of geography they will never be eligible to apply for shared education status. As the criteria stand at present this is the case.

4. The Governors and Staff of Carrickfergus College have adopted a very innovative approach to every initiative from DE over the years. We pioneered the way on the Revised Curriculum and Learning Communities and have been lauded for our ground-breaking work in the field of Emotional Health and Well Being of Pupils and Staff, have assisted upwards of 20 other schools to set up systems to track and raise the outcomes of their pupils, but feel that in the area of shared education we are simply not being allowed access to what is happening.

5. Being a truly Integrated School is, in the opinion of the Governors and Staff of Carrickfergus College, about offering pupils of all abilities the opportunity to access the best teaching and support which can be offered regardless of religious background/ethnicity/sexual orientation/ academic ability, allowing those pupils to complete their education as well rounded, independent learners. Schools which are currently deemed as "shared or integrated" schools were established and made to have a body of pupils from a diverse range of religious backgrounds. Carrickfergus College has had this diversity for over 50 years without recognition.

6. Having "Integrated Education" as it is currently defined protected by both the Anglo Irish Agreement and Good Friday Agreement leaves schools like Carrickfergus College feeling very marginalised. We seem to be unwanted by any sectors of Government or the educational establishment. We are spoken of by those who champion "integrated" education as being responsible for division in our society. That is clearly not the case in Carrickfergus College. Fingers are pointed by the same people accusing schools like Carrickfergus College of not delivering good education to their pupils. Again, clearly not the case when both ETI inspection reports and GCSE and GCE results are scrutinised.

C   Recommendations

1.   The Governors and Staff of Carrickfergus College would ask that the Committee redefine "shared/integrated" schools as being those which open their doors to all pupils regardless of who they are. As indicated above the current definition can mean that statistically a school has "X" % from the Protestant community, "X" % from the Roman Catholic community but there seems to be very little that demonstrates how the school actually meets the needs or desires of it community. How many community groups use its facilities? What level of involvement in the local community does the school have on residents groups or community forums? Is the school disconnected from its community?

2.   We would also ask that opportunities to access funding for "shared/integrated" education projects be looked at to allow schools like ours to be able to apply for such funding rather than excluding good innovative schools.

3.   Finally the Governors and Staff of Carrickfergus College would ask that the Committee lead the way in getting the message out to the public at large that schools like Carrickfergus College are to be valued and provide excellent opportunities to pupils in some of the most deprived areas in our province.

The Governors and Staff of Carrickfergus College would be prepared to give oral evidence to the Education Committee if asked to do so.
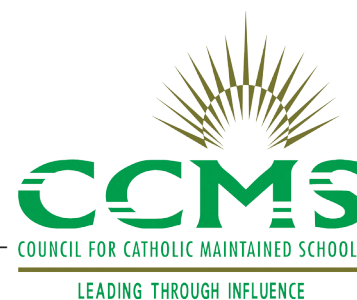
H Webb

Secretary to the Governors of Carrickfergus College
15/10/14

CCMS

Council for Catholic Maintained Schools.

Shared/Integrated Education Inquiry.

Submission of Written Evidence to Northern Ireland Assembly – Committee for Education.
October 2014

1. This evidence is being submitted on behalf of the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools (CCMS).

   CCMS is the Managing Authority for all schools in the Catholic Maintained Sector of education in Northern Ireland. There are 754 Catholic Maintained schools – 32 nurseries, 641 Primary and 68 Post-Primary schools.

   CCMS manages the employment of all teaching staff within the Catholic Maintained sector, a number in excess of 8500.

2. CCMS welcomes the opportunity to submit evidence to the Committee for Education in order to inform its inquiry into Shared/Integrated Education and would wish to be considered to give oral evidence to the Committee.

3. There are 171,548 children in pre-school and primary school education in Northern Ireland.

   - 31.3% of children attending Controlled schools come from a Catholic or "no religion stated" background.

   - 3.3% of children attending Catholic schools are from a non-Catholic background.

   - While the Catholic/Protestant share in Integrated schools is roughly similar, 37.5% and 36.0% respectively, 26.5% of pupils indicated no religious background.

   From these figures it could be concluded that there appears to be a greater readiness from the Catholic community to consider a primary school outside of their traditional sector.

4. The percentage of children from a background other than Catholic who attend a Catholic school does not reflect Catholic Education's overall commitment to creating a society in which everyone is respected, irrespective of their cultural, social, ethnic or religious background.

   This aspect of Catholic Education along with the high quality of education delivered in the majority of Catholic schools is however, demonstrating increasingly to the community at large that Catholic schools are for all and are not just "schools for Catholics."

   This is evident in a number of Catholic schools;

   - School A in Belfast with an enrolment of 362 has 28% of pupils who come from a background other than Catholic.

   - School B in a small seaside town with an enrolment of 53 has 69% of its pupils coming from a background other than Catholic.

   - School C in a mid-sized town has an enrolment of 369 pupils, 69% of whom come from a background other than Catholic.

   - School D, a large post-primary school of 601 pupils has 58% of pupils coming from a background other than Catholic.

   The schools above are only a selection of schools which have a significant number of pupils from a background other than Catholic but they are nevertheless quite clearly and

unapologetically Catholic in ethos and daily practice and are shining examples of integration, inclusion and diversity which has arisen naturally over a period of years.

5.   In the post-primary sector, there are 143,973 pupils.

■ 4.7% of children from a Catholic background attend Controlled schools.

■ 2.5% of children in the Catholic Maintained sector come from a non-Catholic background.

■ The Catholic/Protestant split in Integrated post-primary schools is again fairly even, 35% and 48% respectively with 17% indicating "no religion stated".

It should be noted that more than 33% of children at post-primary stage go to schools of "other management types". The continued existence of the Voluntary Grammar sector will invariably skew figures on the level of attendance at "non-traditional" schools by one sector of the community or another.

6.   Of interest is the fact that, at primary level 18% and at post-primary level 12% of the school population goes to a school for reasons other than religious or other ethos. In that respect, albeit to a small degree, the education system in Northern Ireland is not as "segregated" as some commentators might suggest. In fact, the term segregation to describe the education system in Northern Ireland is incorrect given that segregation, according to the Oxford English Dictionary means;

"enforced separation of racial groups in a community."

The principle of parental preference in the Northern Ireland Education system in no way implies and should not be understood as "enforced separation".

7.   According to the Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education (NICIE), Integrated Education;

"brings children and staff from Catholic and Protestant traditions, as well as those of other faiths, or none, together in one school".

Integrated Education as an option within an educational system in which most children attend largely religiously separated schools began over 31 years ago. In that time, Integrated schools have developed across the country to the point where today there are 62 schools at Nursery (3), Primary (38) and Post-Primary (21) level.

8.   In recent years there has been a tendency for schools within the Controlled sector to transform to "Controlled Integrated" status. In many cases this situation has arisen because of the perceived threat to the future of the school because of the low enrolment.

An examination of the religious breakdown in a selection of ten Controlled schools which transformed to Controlled Integrated status results in some interesting statistics as outlined in the table below.

	% from Protestant background	% from Catholic background	% stating no religion.
Pre-Transformation	55.84%	17.25%	26.93%
Post -transformation	45.09%	30.39%	24.53%

When the schools transformed from Controlled to Controlled Integrated status, the percentage of children from a Protestant background or none fell while the percentage from a Catholic background increased.

Without further in-depth analysis it would be difficult to say why this is the case.

9.   In total there are 315,521 children of school age in Northern Ireland. Of that number 21,745 or 6.89% attend Integrated schools at primary and post-primary level.

While NICIE may claim that through their Admissions Criteria Integrated Schools enroll approximately equal numbers of Catholic and Protestant children, as well as children from other religious and cultural backgrounds the fact remains that the number of Catholics attending *as a percentage of the overall Catholic school age* population is only 4.9%. The *percentage of the overall Protestant school age community* attending is only 8.1%.

Therefore, the overwhelming number of children attending Integrated schools indicated that they are of neither the Catholic or Protestant faith, are of other faiths or have no religious affiliation at all.

The figures above indicate that the intention of bringing "Catholic and Protestant" children together in one school has only partially succeeded. The many polls which continue to be conducted on public opinion towards Integrated Education and which appear to demonstrate "significant" support for Integrated schools do not in practice reflect that. Parental preference continues to be exerted along traditional lines, as parents continue to send their children to schools which are largely in keeping with their religious, cultural, social or other beliefs and traditions. Indeed, in many cases their choice of school may be more to do with the quality of education or convenience rather that religious affiliation.

10.   What are the factors then that have prevented Integrated Education from achieving its ultimate goal of creating a sector to "challenge" the existing Controlled, Catholic Maintained and Voluntary sectors? They are most likely the same factors that will challenge the development of Shared Education, namely;

A.   The continuation of cultural and social division. There is no concept of shared identity in Northern Ireland with the community at large being divided along Unionist/ Nationalist lines. Cultural identity and sectarianism remains rooted in communities, not schools. An unwritten policy of separation remains with the continued existence of "Peace Walls" across the city of Belfast and in other centres across Northern Ireland.

In June 2012, a piece of research funded by OFMDFM and carried out by the University of Ulster entitled "Attitudes to Peace Walls" provided a valuable insight into the attitudes of those who live in close proximity to peace walls as well as those from society in general. Among other things the report concluded that;

■ 78% of the respondents in the survey believe that the segregation of communities is common in Northern Ireland even where there aren't any peace walls.

■ 69% maintain peace walls are still necessary because of the potential for violence.

■ 43% of Protestants compared to 20% of Catholics think peace walls protect their sense of identity.

■ Catholics (40%) are more likely than Protestants (30%) to think there should be more opportunities for the two communities to come together to create the necessary conditions for the removal of the peace walls.

There are over 80 peace walls across Northern Ireland with the first being erected in 1969 in Cupar Way between the Falls and Shankill Roads. The Army Major over-seeing the construction of the wall at the time stated;

"This is a temporary measure, we do not want another Berlin Wall situation in western Europe. It will be gone by Christmas".

B.   Urban gentrification. The economic boom pre-2008 created opportunities for large sections of the community to move up the social and property ladder and a process of gentrification (intended or otherwise at a Government policy level) "created new

layers of residential segregation in a city already preoccupied with ethno-religious territoriality". (B.Murtagh. Urban Studies 2011).

This alongside a lack of meaningful investment in areas such as North and West Belfast in particular and the political quarrel over, for example, housing as part of the Girdwood Barracks development resulted only in the continued stagnation and growth of many large, social housing developments which remain divided along sectarian lines.

The outcome? Those with the purchasing power, skills, transport and easy access to employment are "differentiated from those trapped in the single entity estates in the inner and outer city". (B.Murtagh. Urban Studies 2011).

C.   The issues of skills/skills deficit are perpetuated alongside the social division created by an education system which promotes inequality and social differences i.e. selective grammar schooling and the social class implication. Traditional industries have disappeared and given that such industries normally provided access to employment for a, predominantly, working class Protestant workforce without the overt need for education, that community now lags behind in terms of educational outcomes as the need for "education" was not something which was highly valued.

That being the case there is a need for an education system which provides and encourages access for all to high quality education which concentrates on the needs of society and provides young people with the skills and opportunities to meet those needs.

D.   Fear – The dominant communities have become even more polarized since the 'Good Friday' Agreement, especially at the working class level and perhaps to a more sanitized degree further up the socio-economic ladder.

11.   CCMS would argue therefore that now is the time to consider the whole concept of Shared/ Integrated Education in Northern Ireland in a different light and to look at alternative means of fulfilling the objective put before the TACOT:IE (Towards a Culture of Tolerance: Integrated Education) Working Group in 1998, namely;

"to examine ways in which all schools could contribute further to the promotion of a culture of tolerance as outlined in the Belfast Agreement."

As a starting point, CCMS would suggest that linguistically we should move away from the term Integrated Education and begin focusing on how schools can explore a spectrum of shared options based on educational provision and access rather than on a political or philosophical basis. The definition of Shared Education used by the QUB Centre for Shared Education is as good a starting point as any;

"Shared Education is broadly defined as any collaborative activity within or between schools or other educational institutions that can: contribute towards school improvement, provide access to opportunity, encourage more effective use of resources, and promote social cohesion"

11.   CCMS also believes that after 30 years, the time has come for the Department to dispense with its statutory duty to encourage and facilitate the development of Integrated education. If after 30 years the sector has grown to the point where it commands only 6.89% of the school age population in Northern Ireland, the Department should evaluate the public appetite for 'Integrated Education' as a sectoral entity, reconsider the 'statutory duty' and look to the promotion of other "initiatives" which have a greater chance of making more effective use of limited resources, promoting social cohesion and delivering on the general principles of TACOT:IT as outlined below;

a.   It is a seminal purpose of the Northern Ireland Education Service to promote a culture of tolerance and reconciliation and, for schools, to do so in keeping with the particular

ethos and circumstances within which they operate. These different approaches should be valued and all schools encouraged to provide further opportunities to promote a culture of tolerance.

b.   There should continue to be a pluralist approach to education, expressed in a plurality of structures (i.e. different types of school) and ethos.

c.   All schools should provide a pluralist curriculum promoting tolerance and mutual understanding.

d.   The present structure for schooling has been determined by parental wishes and, subject to the provision of efficient instruction and training and the avoidance of unreasonable public expenditure, pupils should continue to be educated in accordance with the wishes of their parents.

e.   education policy, administration, school funding and school support should be fair and equitable to all grant-aided schools, i.e. controlled, voluntary, integrated, Irish-medium maintained, denominational, non-denominational, etc.

(TACOT:IT June 1998)

12.   The principles outlined in (8) above clearly focus on the fundamental obligation of Government to ensure that, within reason and recognising the Department's Sustainable Schools Policy and the principles of Area Based Planning, pupils continue to be educated in accordance with the wishes of their parents, recognizing that in a society which is truly committed to respecting diversity there can and should be an acceptance of diversity in the nature of education provision – Controlled, Catholic Maintained, Integrated, Irish Medium or other.

The existence of various forms of education, each espousing its own distinctive ethos, is evident throughout the world as is the recognition that where change is deemed to be necessary it can be brought about while maintaining respect for each individual education sector or provider.

This has been delivered in many places across the world through the concept of Shared Education and Shared Campuses.

13.   There have been and continue to be many examples of Shared Education in Northern Ireland which have developed from agreed local need or practices and through the EMU and CRED programmes. The Centre for Shared Education in QUB has involved over 7000 students in various shared programmes and the CREDIT - Classrooms Re-imagined: Education in Diversity and Inclusion for Teachers - programme which was delivered jointly by St Mary's University College and Stramnillis University College brought together teachers from all sectors with the aim of enabling them to develop skills and confidence with issues of division, diversity, inclusion and community cohesion in the classroom and on a whole school basis.

In recent months the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister announced the Shared Campus Programme and the first successful projects have only just been approved. As these projects move forward the potential will grow for a range of sharing options, from limited curriculum interaction to shared governance.

This is a very exciting development in education delivery in Northern Ireland and one which has been evident in other countries for some time. We should endeavor to learn what we can from them in order to ensure success in our own endeavors.

14.   In the United States of America, Shared Campuses have been the norm for many years. In New York, of the city's 1500 schools, about 600 are shared campuses. Supporters of the shared campus model argue that they increase the number of academic offerings, develop appropriate school sizes and more effectively use the available school buildings.

In one instance a school of 280 students shares a building with a 630 pupil school. A doorway serves as the "boundary" between one school and the other. There are of course hurdles to overcome but the arrangement is "overwhelmingly" successful.

Each school can retain its own distinctive ethos;

> "School A's students wear uniforms, walk in single file and remain in school until 5pm. The walls are adorned with murals of classic book covers and inspirational messages. School B's hallways are barren and painted uniformly yellow and its students are gone from the building by 3pm. Seven years ago it was considered among the worst schools in the city of New York. Now it's achieving a Grade B on the city's progress report".

The keys to success are meeting the needs of pupils in different ways, sharing instructional practices, students working inside each other's classrooms learning from and understanding each other, developing relationships and respecting the existence of each other's school.

Such has been the success of the New York venture that other cities across the USA like Chicago and Denver are moving in the same direction.

15.   Closer to home and in an environment more akin to our own is Scotland. In recent years, several local Council areas have developed shared campus options in an effort to ensure that different sectors have retained an educational presence in particular areas while ensuring access to a full-educational experience. The arrangements invariably involve collaboration between Catholic and non-denominational schools. In some cases the Catholic school is the larger partner and in others the non-denominational school. Midlothian, Argyll & Bute and North Lanarkshire Councils are among those which have taken this route. In the case of North Lanarkshire the rationale for the development of the Shared Campus design is;

> "based on financial and best value consideration. The building of schools with shared infrastructure generates savings and as a result more schools can be built or refurbished from the available resources. In addition, the model reduces the need to close small schools, particularly in rural areas, and enables the community to access greatly enhanced facilities". (North Lanarkshire Protocol for Management of a Shared Campus)

While "financial and best value considerations" were to the fore, the parties concerned underlined their "commitment to the preservation, development and respect for the identity and distinctiveness of each school." The Council went one step further and emphasized that it was "unequivocally committed to Catholic education".

All aspects of the Shared Campus arrangement were outlined in a management protocol; from respect for individual school identity and ethos through leadership, collaboration, communication right down to timetabling for use of the various shared facilities.

16.   In 2008 North Lanarkshire Council commissioned an independent evaluation of Shared Campus schools within the District Council area. For the most part the findings were very positive in tone;

■ It was the almost unanimous view of head teachers and staff that the shared campus environment had in no way impaired the traditional link between the individual school and the chaplain or the local church(es).

■ The smaller school is treated as an equal partner in the shared campus arrangement.

■ The protocol has played a significant role in the development of the shared campus model in North Lanarkshire.

■ The implementation of the authority protocol for the operation of joint campuses had generated no difficulties for head teachers.

■ Managing in a shared campus context is considered by head teachers to be more complex than managing in a single school environment.

- Pupils consider the best feature of sharing a campus with another school is the opportunity to meet more people and make more friends.

- The main pupil dislikes about their new environments have to do with noisy and cramped teaching/learning conditions and dining areas.

- There was almost unanimous support from staff, pupils and parents that the staff and pupils of the schools on a shared campus site show respect and good manners to each other.

- Relationships between staff and pupils of shared campus schools appear for the most part to be positive, solidly grounded and free from denominational tensions.

- Parents perceive the main benefit of sharing a campus to be associated with providing opportunities for children in the local area to travel to school together and to interact socially in their new environment.

- Between 85-90% of parents rated the quality of the educational experience being received by their children in a shared campus environment as very good or good, with no parents rating it unsatisfactory.

It is clear therefore from the experiences in Scotland that under certain circumstances and with the appropriate level of commitment, preparation and planning, a shared campus arrangement can work.

17.   Of course, not everyone is at a stage where a shared campus would be a viable option. In those cases where it is hoped to develop such arrangements there is a long history of collaboration between the schools involved. This however does not prevent the development of sharing and the Department should consider how it can facilitate a range of potential options from the very low to very high level, for example;

- Extending the concept of the 'Area Learning Community' to include all phases of education and to use this vehicle as the principal portal for continuous professional development of staff.

- Putting greater emphasis on EMU/CRED activity being a key element of the curriculum in each year of a child's time in school.

- Encouraging joint curriculum development days, especially between the staff of small schools where considerable responsibility for several areas of staff development is placed on the shoulders of a small number of staff.

- Where one school cannot afford to employ additional staff, options for employment of staff across more than one school should be explored, especially in specialist areas such as music, art, physical education. The recent signature project which saw the employment of additional teachers in schools could be developed along these lines.

- Encourage schools to collaborate more fully in providing children with extra-curricular activities.

- Joint activities/curriculum workshops for parents across a number of schools.

18.   It will not, however, be easy to develop an agreed approach to sharing while the education system in Northern Ireland remains in a state of uncertainty and confusion. The Department must take affirmative action to ensure that the climate across all sectors is conducive to the promotion of shared education. CCMS would suggest that priorities for action should include;

- Promoting, as far as is possible, a 'social balance' in schools;

- Ending selection in reality and legislating against anything which perpetuates academic and/or social selection;

- Ensuring equality of access for all based on agreed and enforceable criteria;

- Recognising diversity of provision and the principle of parental preference and moving away from a "duty" to promote Integrated Education;

- Creating a multi-sectoral, equal system for all then exploring how "sharing" might be facilitated.

It must be recognised that integration/sharing/shared education cannot be enforced; it must develop naturally from the bottom up and in a range of different guises. The responsibility for this cannot be left to schools alone and while schools do have a key part to play, integration throughout society has to be a reality and the norm, if we are to work collaboratively to resolve the problems which Northern Ireland continues to face.

In 2004, the First Minister teamed up with Cardinal Keith O'Brien and a representative from the Church of Scotland to open a shared campus, which housed St David's High School and Dalkeith High, in Midlothian - the first to be opened on Mr McConnell's watch.

In 2004, the First Minister teamed up with Cardinal Keith O'Brien and a representative from the Church of Scotland to open a shared campus, which housed St David's High School and Dalkeith High, in Midlothian - the first to be opened on Mr McConnell's watch.

In 2004, the First Minister teamed up with Cardinal Keith O'Brien and a representative from the Church of Scotland to open a shared campus, which housed St David's High School and Dalkeith High, in Midlothian - the first to be opened on Mr McConnell's watch.

19. In conclusion, CCMS believes that an integrated, shared system of education for Northern Ireland is achievable but it has to develop in a society which is mature to the point where individual and distinct sectors are recognized and valued for the contribution they make to a shared society.

CCMS and Catholic Education have consistently demonstrated its willingness to be part of that shared, education system. From as far back as 2001, the Catholic Bishops of Northern Ireland (Building Peace Shaping the Future) were promoting the very strong message that Catholic schools, in living out their philosophy and ethos, are obliged to;

- Provide friendly contacts between pupils of different characters and backgrounds in order to encourage mutual understanding;

- Assist society to move beyond its deeply-ingrained divisions into a new coherence and openness to the world at large;

- Promote reconciliation and the common good;

- Recognize that the attendance at our schools of children from other denominations and none is an enrichment of the education experience offered by the school and is seen as a practical expression of the commitment to inclusivity.

CCMS and Catholic schools recognize that it is only in partnership that Northern Ireland will achieve the peace and reconciliation that all its people deserve. We cannot do that alone and stand ready to face the challenges of working with others across all sectors of Education and beyond to achieve the goal we all desire, a society in which we can live and work together in peace and harmony, not only accepting but cherishing difference.

Ceara Special School

Submission to the Education Committee in relation to Shared/Integrated Education

My name is Dr Peter G Cunningham MBE, my entire teaching career, 35 years, has been spent educating children who have special educational needs. I have been the principal of Ceara Special School, Lurgan for the last twenty years.

I have been a member of the Southern Education & Library Board for the last fifteen years and am currently a member of the Southern Education Transitional Board where I 'chair' Board's Child Protection Committee.

I am a member of the Special Educational Needs and Disability Tribunal, and have been for the last six years.

I am a member of CCEA Council.

I have been an associate inspector of schools (the first ever) for the Department for Education.

I have presented talks for the Regional Training Unit on educational management to educators from all sections of the educational community.

I have spoken on special educational issues to the European Parliament. More specifically, the inclusion of children who have special educational needs into mainstream contexts; and the effective management of ASD in mainstream schools.

I have a 2:1 (Hons.) in Special Education; an M. Phil in Special Educational Issues; a M.Sc. in Educational Management and a Ph. D in Special Education Management.

> My evidence to the Committee will look at the advantages of a shared/integrated education from the perspective of the child/pupil and teaching and support staff.

At the outset I would remind everyone that the special school system (special care) when initiated in 1948 was a fully shared/integrated system, open to all children irrespective of religious belief or ability levels and to that end predated the Integrated Education movement by some 40 years.

I also note that the last time the role of the special school was 'looked at' by DE was in June 2006. I suggest that much of that document has merit today and would recommend it to the committee. In the South of Ireland the role of the special school was reviewed in 2009 by the National Council for Special Education (NASP), again much of the report has a great deal of merit.

Current DE policy is to encourage the maximum possible level of inclusion for children who have special educational needs within mainstream schools. This policy trend does give rise to an uncertainty around the role and operation of special schools. This review by the Education Committee is timely given the protracted gestation of the Special Education Review.

School Based Considerations

It is my view that children, irrespective of ability, should be educated with their peers in local schools in schools that are appropriately resourced and taught by highly trained and motivated staff who celebrate achievements and tackle difficulties head on and with enthusiasm; and that ELBs have a responsibility to provide a range of provision to meet those diverse needs. However, I recognize that for some children who have severe and complex special needs that a placement in a special school is an appropriate placement. In this

respect it is important to note that the needs and difficulties faced by teachers within the special school sector have changed significantly over the recent years especially with regard to behavioural issues.

Consequently, the special school should be viewed as an integral part of the totality of the educational provision – a continuum of provision. A special school placement should not be regarded as a segregated placement. An 'inclusive special school' is now very much the norm in many of our special schools in Northern Ireland, assisted in no small way by the inclusion of special schools into the Area Learning Communities.

It is my view that mainstream schools with an inclusive orientation are the most effective means of combating discriminatory attitudes, creating welcoming communities, building an inclusive society and achieving education for all and while I believe that there will always be the need for special school provision it need not be segregated provision. The day of the inclusive special school is very much with us. For example

■ There is a trend toward increased connectivity between special and mainstream schools and special schools and special units.

■ Special schools are part of every Area Learning Community in the country;

■ More pupils from mainstream schools now visit special schools throughout the year than ever before.

There have never been as many children who have, or may have, special educational needs (SEN) in the school population. Many of these children attend special schools where, over the years staff have developed a wide range of expertise and skills in education these children. More recently, an increasing number of children who previously would have attended special schools now attend 'mainstream' schools. This places additional stresses on 'mainstream' staff.

As a group, children who have special educational needs are disproportionately more from disadvantaged backgrounds, are much more likely to be absent or excluded from school and achieve less well than their peers both in terms of attainment at any given age and in terms of their progress over time. Post sixteen years, young persons with special educational needs comprise one of the groups most likely not to be in education, not to be in employment or not to be in training.

Recommendation One

Staff from special schools could/should advise and support their colleagues in 'mainstream' schools on many of the issues facing children who have SEN. The Area Learning Communities could be the forum for this to occur. CPD for mainstream staff could take place in special schools. A two way process.

An 'all encompassing' approach

There is confusion around the term 'shared/integrated education'. Does it mean 'education for disabled children'? Is there a difference between 'education for all' and 'inclusive education'? What does it look like in reality?

A lot has been written about inclusion, a great deal has also been spoken about it with the somewhat unfortunate consequence of polarised views that state that the angels are on the side of the 'inclusionists' and the demons are with the 'segregationists'. Such debates often generate more heat than light. I see the concept of shared/integrated education as inseparable from the concept of quality education: education cannot be considered good quality unless it meets the needs of all its learners.

We need to be clear that the principles of shared/integrated education encompass a much broader range of issues than disability. But the changes needed to ensure that children with disabilities can benefit from education are not very different from the changes needed to help all excluded children get an education.

Recommendation Two

Making education 'shared/integrated' requires schools and education authorities to remove barriers to education experienced by the most excluded children – often the poorest, children with disabilities, children without family care, or children from minority groups. This will require cross-departmental, interagency collaborative working arrangements. Something we really are not very good at.

A Really Special 'Special School'

Currently, special schools cater for a range of special educational need. A broad spectrum of need. With advances in medical science children with very special needs are living to school age. These children require a 'medicalised' educational provision. I would suggest that now there is the need, at least at KS1 and KS2 to have regional schools, which can deal with very specific special educational needs. In this regard I am thinking of those children with extreme behavioural issues. This is the norm in many areas of the UK.

Recommendation Three

Establish schools (units), which, with an integrated approach, could deal with specific SEN from both children from special schools and those from mainstream schools.

Duel Placements

To date, pupils with SEN are enrolled in a specific school. You are special or you are not! This 'them or us' silo mentality does not consider that for the vast majority of children with SEN a 'duel placement' would be very advantageous for both their curricular and social development. The social inclusion benefits cannot be over estimated. Four days in a mainstream school and one day in the special school so to speak – an extended version of ALC 'Entitlement Framework' arrangements. This type of arrange does happen in NI at the moment but where it does it is 'informal'.

Recommendation Three

A change in DE policy that would allow duel enrolments with consideration to school funding and transportation as happens with EOTAS placements. Duel enrolments could be facilitated by co-locating mainstream and special schools.

Interdepartmental Collaboration

In 1986, special schools split from the Department for Health Authorities and became the responsibility of the Department for Education as previously mentioned. In my view, that split was too clean and too clinical. We need a more shared, integrated, inclusive practical working relationship in schools between Health and Education especially in special schools. The complex nature of the needs of the children I work with requires this joined up working collaborative relationships rather than the – what appears some time to be the jealous guarding of departmental boundaries. That is the new battle for shared/integrated education – departmental inclusion.

Recommendation Four

The establishment of collaborative working arrangements with health and social services to enable the development of multi-disciplinary shared/integrated service provision to all schools with all the benefits that could flow from such an arrangement.

Post 16 Provisions

As previously stated, there are increasing numbers of children in our special schools. This means that there are increasing numbers of young adults leaving, or about to leave our special schools. There needs to be the same opportunities available from a FE perspective to young adults with SEN. In this regard the 'shared education' vision implicit in the ALC arrangements could be better utilised.

Recommendation Five

There should be better cooperation between DE and DEL to ensure that our FE Colleges provide equality of opportunity for 'statemented' students.

Oral Evidence

I have no problems should the Committee wish to invite me to present oral evidence.

Dr Peter G Cunningham MBE
Ceara Special School

CnaG

Written Evidence to the Shared/Integrated Education Inquiry

25/3/15

1.1.   Comhairle na Gaelscolaíochta (CnaG) welcomes the opportunity to present written evidence to the Northern Ireland Assembly Education Committee on Shared/Integrated Education.

Introduction

1.2.   CnaG is a Department of Education (DE) sponsored council responsible for the provision of advice pertaining to the development and provision of IME. CnaG was established as a direct consequence of the Good Friday Agreement (GFA), which placed a statutory duty on DE "to encourage and facilitate the development IME". Article 89 of the 1998 Education Order that followed the GFA contained provision to allow DE to pay grants to any "body appearing to the Department to have as an objective the encouragement or promotion of IME".

1.3.   There are currently over 5,000 children in the IME sector from pre-school to post-primary level attending IME grant-maintained schools, IME Catholic maintained schools and units, IME controlled schools, IME voluntary grammar school (IME Stream) and IME voluntary non-maintained (IME Stream). In the IME sector, there are 32 voluntary pre-schools, 12 nursery units attached to IME provision, 29 stand-alone IME primary schools, 7 IME units attached to English-medium Primary schools, one stand-alone post-primary school and 3 IME streams attached to English-medium post-primary schools.

1.4.   In 2011/12 there was a growth of 3.6% in the IME sector, in 2012/13 there was a 5.3% growth and the sector grew by 5.9% in 2013/14. CnaG calculates that the growth in 2014/15 will be 6.0%+. This would be greater if IME post-primary was available to IME primary pupils who lack easy access to this. Currently just above one third of IME pupils do not have easy access to IME post-primary provision.

1.5.   IME schools cross a number of institutional school sectors. There are IME schools in the Controlled sector, in the Catholic Maintained sector and the Grant Maintained sector. The Irish-medium sector is co-educational, welcoming children from all religious backgrounds or none and all abilities. Although there are currently no IME schools within the Integrated sector C na G would welcome such a development in keeping with the wishes of parents and school communities.

1.6.   It is CnaG's role to represent the children, staff and schools in the IME sector as well as the wider IME community. We advise DE and others in relation to the specific needs of IME pupils, staff and schools. CnaG also lobbies on behalf of the sector and provides practical support and advice to parents wishing to establish IME provision in new areas, or those who wish to access IME.

Comments on Shared/Integrated Education

2.1.   CnaG agrees with and supports the principles of inclusive shared education as a means of providing young people with opportunities to learn together and to reach their potential in educational achievements and as informed citizens and as a means of breaking down barriers arising from historic conflict.

2.2   CnaG coordinated a Shared Education project, Together Through Culture, funded by the International Fund for Ireland which involved pupils and teachers in schools learning about our shared Irish language heritage associated with surnames, placenames, songs, dance and

the Irish language. The success of this project is evidence that the Irish-medium Education sector can contribute to the aims of Shared Education in a meaningful and productive way. Irish-medium Education could contribute to many issues associated with the principles of Shared Education including but not limited to the following: promoting greater understanding of and respect for the Irish language and other languages and cultures; wider cultural experience; a greater understanding of lifestyle differences and a greater understanding of the benefits of bilingualism and multilingualism.

2.3   CnaG advises the Department of Education that Irish-medium participation in Shared Education developments must acknowledge and respect the language dynamic of the school. It would be unfair to expect Irish-medium schools to engage in Shared Education experiences solely through the medium of English. Opportunities must be planned strategically to ensure that respect for the ethos and language dynamic of the pupils and teachers is secured.

The nature and definition of Shared Education and Integrated Education across all educational phases – including consideration of the need for a formal statutory definition and an obligation in statute to facilitate and encourage Shared Education;

3.1   CnaG advises that an agreed definition of Shared Education promoted by the Department of Education should be amended to reflect the fact that the education system in NI has both monolingual and bilingual settings and that the Department of Education in its statutory duty to facilitate and encourage Irish-medium Education must ensure that Shared Education is not delivered through one language, namely English.

Key barriers and enablers for Shared Education and Integrated Education;

Barriers

4.1.   The majority of schools in Northern Ireland are monolingual English-medium schools. However, a creative approach which is sensitive to the Irish-medium ethos can mitigate this barrier in order to deliver authentic and respectful Shared Education opportunities for all pupils, schools and communities.

Enablers

4.2.   A range of research on the benefits of bilingualism indicates that bilingual children are, on the whole, more open to cultural diversity, due to the cultural enrichment they experienced. Irish-medium Education facilitates greater tolerance and understanding of other cultures; a truly shared educational experience.

4.3.   In the context of Shared Education, 72% of all IME primary schools are independent, outside of the controlled or catholic maintained sector and have pupils from Catholic,

Protestant and other backgrounds. Irish-medium Education is a choice for everyone in every community. Currently 6% of IME primary schools are within the controlled sector, 22% within the catholic maintained sector and 72% within the other maintained sector. Irish-medium Education is a linguistic choice for parents and pupils which can be catered for within all sectors. It actively encourages communities to avail of the advantages of bilingualism.

4.4.   The system of immersion education which is used in Irish-medium Education is recognised globally for excellence. Not only does it deliver on Shared Education, but on shared heritage, language, traditions and history. It also delivers on the Department of Education's core vision, "Every young person achieving to his or her full potential at each stage of his or her development.

4.5.   Immersion education is acknowledged as most effective way of developing second language fluency in children and young people. In the context of Shared Education, fluency in

both English as a major global language and Irish as a minority and native language has potential to bring communities together in a shared future as outlined in the Programme for Government.

What priorities and actions need to be taken to improve sharing and integration.

5.1   Definition of Shared Education must be revised to reflect linguistic diversity and to deliver the Department of Education's statutory duties to encourage and facilitate Irish-medium Education;

5.2   Shared Education pilot projects should be initiated, funded and evaluated which take cognisance of the nature and the specific needs of the Irish-medium school sector.

Committee for Employment and Learning

Committee for Employment and Learning
Room 416
Parliament Buildings

Tel: +44 (0)28 9052 1448
cathie.white@niassembly.gov.uk

To: Peter McCallion
Clerk to the Committee for Education

From: Cathie White
Clerk to the Employment and Learning Committee

Date: 10 September 2014

Subject: Inquiry into Shared / Integrated Education

Peter,

At its meeting today the Committee for Employment and Learning considered your correspondence regarding your inquiry into shared / integrated education.

The Committee agreed to note the correspondence and to inform the Committee for Education that it has a number of Hansard transcripts on the NI Assembly website which may be of use.

I should be grateful if you would bring this to the attention of your Committee.

Cathie White
Committee Clerk

Enc.

Committee for the Office of the First and Deputy First Minister

Committee for the Office of the First Minister
and Deputy First Minister
Room 285
Parliament Buildings

Tel: 028 90521903
Email: committee.ofmdfm@niassembly.gov.uk

From: Kathy O'Hanlon - Clerk to the Committee for the Office of the First Minister
            and deputy First Minister

Date: 11 September 2014

To: Peter McCallion – Clerk to the Committee for Education

Subject: Inquiry into Shared / Integrated Education

At its meeting of 10 September 2014, this Committee noted correspondence from the Committee for Education detailing the Terms of Reference for its Inquiry into Shared / Integrated Education.

The Committee agreed to write to advise that if any issues relating to Shared / Integrated Education arise in response to its Inquiry into Building a United Community, that these will be referred to the Committee for Education for consideration.

Regards

Kathy O'Hanlon
Clerk to the Committee

Community Relations Council

Peter McCallion
Committee Clerk
Room 375a, Parliament Buildings,
Ballymiscaw, Stormont,
Belfast, BT4 3XX
committee.education@niassembly.gov.uk

October 2014

Dear Committee Clerk

RE: Inquiry into Shared and Integrated Education

The Community Relations Council (CRC) welcomes the opportunity to contribute to the Committee's inquiry into Integrated Education and Shared Education.

Education, both formal and informal, can act as a critical player in developing, supporting and achieving reconciliation in our conflict transformation process. This will require a systematic approach to support the embedding and mainstreaming of good relations across and within educational structures, policies, practices and procedures. The presumption that we have parallel and polarised systems that will meet the needs of children and young people should be replaced with a common commitment to enhance and maximise opportunities for meeting, sharing and collaborating on a cross-community basis both at a policy and a structural level.

CRC supports a vision of educating children together, and whilst CRC does not advocate a single uniform model of sharing or integration, it sets at its core the need to ensure the education of children provides maximum opportunities for engagement and enrichment. Local circumstances will require local solutions, and must be supported by a genuine policy priority to help make it happen. Political will and leadership are crucial to the delivery of these educational commitments.

A core element of CRC's intervention, whether policy comment[1] or financial support, has focused on the quality and the sustainability of the contact. CRC advocates for collaborative relationships and engagement, either through legislation, incentivizing or encouragement, and recommends the following principles - equity, diversity, interdependence, welcoming, open, accessible, and safe, to ground this interaction. Utilizing these principles, during the design and development stages of collaboration and partnership, will help set a trajectory that delivers high quality and long-term sustainable engagement, as well as contributing to reconciliation and peace-building.

General Comments

From the outset, the Committee may want to remind themselves of the various international and domestic legislation relevant to the inquiry (Appendix 1). It would also be useful to note the positioning of education in a number of peace accords/negotiations[2] as important components in our peace process. However, it is the outworking of these agreements into the legislative and policy environment that will ultimately test the commitment of these political commitments.

---

1   Appendix 3.

2   In the context of a society emerging from conflict it is important to bear in mind the focus afforded to educating children together within local political accords. The Belfast/Good Friday Agreement (1998) states that 'an essential aspect of the reconciliation process is the promotion of a culture of tolerance at every level of society, including initiatives to facilitate and encourage integrated education and mixed housing'. The Hillsborough castle agreement also included a pledge from the British government to gift four former military bases to the NI executive highlighting an expectation that land in Omagh would be used for an educational campus

Finally, a number of legislative and policy instruments already exist which support or have the potential to further support and enhance the education of children together. Appendix 2 draws attention to some of these mechanisms.

Integration and Sharing - Evidence

The policy development process does not take place in isolation. As well as legislation and policy development there are a number of important external influencers. A range of independent reviews and research have been carried out, with each presenting recommendations that seek to influence and generate change. This includes the Strategic Review of the Schools Estate (2006) Report[3], and the more recent report from the independent Ministerial Advisory Group (MAG) on the Advancement of Shared Education'(April 2013)[4] which published 20 recommendations[5]. The Minister for Education responded positively to the report.

The report also included a definition of sharing 'shared education involves two or more schools or other educational institutions from different sectors working in collaboration with the aim of delivering educational benefits to learners, promoting the efficient and effective use of resources, and promoting equality of opportunity, good relations, equality of identity, respect for diversity and community cohesion[6]'.

Other research relevant to this current debate includes the NI Commissioner for Children and Young People's research (NICCY) 'Shared Education - the views of children and young people'[7], and the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission's (NIHRC) report on 'Education Reform in Northern Ireland-a human rights perspective'[8].

In addition to this are the studies that examine the benefits of sustained contact, both in terms of education and inter-community relations. For example Vani Borooah and Colin Knox considered a range of independent research as well as the Shared Education Programme [SEP] initiative, and report on the 'significant types of benefits arising from shared education: economic, education and reconciliation benefits'[9]. They conclude that involvement in the SEP initiative would (A) Increase the likelihood of: getting good GCSE's, gaining fluency in a foreign language, and going to University; (B) reaffirm Hughes et al research that 'separate schooling is more likely to contribute to 'own' group bias, stereotyping and prejudice'[10] and that educational contact is valuable 'as a mechanism for promoting more harmonious relationships that can help promote social cohesion in a society that remains deeply divided'[11]; and finally (C) budgetary savings e.g. creating sustainable schools, as well as estimated savings of £80m per year[12] to society regarding reduced police costs and increased foreign investment due to reconciliation benefits.

---

3   This report called on government to 'provide tangible support to schools that are actively engaged in sharing with other schools, or schools that are developing an inclusive environment in recognition of the diversity of their pupils' religious, cultural and ethnic backgrounds' http://www.deni.gov.uk/letter_and_statement.pdf

4   Ministerial Advisory Group on Advancing Shared Education – Terms of Reference; http://www.deni.gov.uk/shared_education_advisory_group_terms_of_reference.pdf

5   Recommendations were presented under 5 themes a) mainstreaming shared education b) supporting schools in shared education c) schools and other educational institutions d) area-based planning and the schools estate, and finally e) academic selection. http://www.qub.ac.uk/schools/SchoolofEducation/MinisterialAdvisoryGroup/FinalReport/

6   MAG Report-Page 7

7   http://www.niccy.org/downloads/2013/publications/Adult_Report.pdf

8   http://www.nihrc.org/index.php/news/item/download/48

9   http://www.niassembly.gov.uk/Documents/RaISe/knowledge_exchange/KESS-01-11-2012.pdf Page 2.

10   Hughes, J. (2011) 'Are Separate Schools divisive? A Case Study from Northern Ireland' British Educational Research Journal 37(5) 829-850.

11   Hughes, J., Lolliot, S., Hewstone, M., Schmid, K. and Carlisle, K. (2012) Sharing Classes between Separate Schools: a mechanism for improving inter-group relations in Northern Ireland? Policy Futures in Education 10(5).

12   Borooah, V. and Knox, C. (2011) The Economics of the Shared Education Programme. University of Ulster

Lastly, it is important to pay attention to the aspirations of society in this area. Opinion polls regularly highlight the high levels of support for educating children together e.g. '79% of parents interviewed said they would back a move to transform their child's school to integrated, while 66% of all people questioned believe integrated schools should be the main model of our education system. Furthermore more than two-thirds said an integrated school best prepares children for living and working in a diverse society[13]'.

Integration and Sharing – Practice

There are many models and approaches that impact positively on collaboration and partnership between schools on a cross-community basis e.g. the department's Community Relations Equity and Diversity (CRED) Policy and Enhancement Scheme; whilst others are financially supported by external and international funders e.g. the International Fund for Ireland (IFI) and Atlantic Philanthropies (AP) support the 'Sharing Education Programme'[14], and the IFI Sharing In Education Programme, and the Integrated Education Fund (IEF)[15] through a range of grants[16].

Recent announcements commit further investment for shared education such as Atlantic Philanthropies[17], as well as the anticipated investment from Peace IV which will be allocated to support 'shared education initiatives'. This range of financial support signifies a huge commitment to encouraging and supporting schools to work and bring children together.

However, whilst these practical interventions produce positive outcomes they affect a small number of children. The current £25 million funding from philanthropy organisations for sharing involves approximately 10,000 children (approximately 2% of the school population)[18], and the formal integrated sector represents 62 integrated schools (42 primary and 20 post-primary) which educates just over 21,500 children and young people. So whilst they are delivering constructive and tangible outcomes it could be viewed as having limited success. Moreover, given that some of the external money is a transitory measure, it could be argued that there is a limit to its success unless the learning and practice is strategically supported by the department. There is a danger programmatic interventions are prioritised and becomes the status quo which could result in limited opportunities for systemic change.

It is crucial for the department to give serious consideration as to how sustained and high quality contact will be secured post-external investment. CRC's response to the Peace IV consultation highlighted the importance of seeking assurances for supporting the development of a commitment from the governing structures – both local and departmental, to tackle the issue of sustainability and quality of contact during and post-Peace IV. These new monies are valuable and need to build on previous interventions – they should not be viewed as more of the same but rather grasped as an opportunity to support long-lasting structural change that enable sustainable, high quality contact across the various educational structures and personnel after Peace IV.

---

13   http://www.ief.org.uk/2013/02/28/recent-poll-shows-overwhelming-support-for-integrated-education/

14   www.schoolsworkingtogether.co.uk

15   Since its foundation in 1992, the Integrated Education Fund has made grants totalling over £15 million to schools and groups; http://www.ief.org.uk/about-us/what-we-do/projectsmadepossible/

16   Other grants include Support for Library Resources at Transforming Integrated Schools , Support for Existing Integrated Schools, Support for a Fledgling Grant Maintained Integrated Primary School, Grants for projects supporting newcomers and cultural diversity, Additional support for schools still growing, and Support for other small or unique/one off projects.

17   'Robinson and McGuinness announce £58million investment'. OFMDFM Press Release 17 September 2014.

18   Alan Smith, UNESCO. http://15yearson.com/2013/04/08/is-the-government-planning-for-separate-development/

Moving forward

The following comments are CRC's views as to how this could be achieved. There are 4 key drivers in relation to educating children together:

Policy

The advancement of policy, political and economic priorities requires strategic political leadership is critical, therefore the Minister of Education and the Department should give greater strategic direction to the schools sector to ensure the teaching and practice of good relations is successfully mainstreamed across all schools.

Current practice and evidence must have a stronger influence on the development of educational policy in order to improve educational outcomes and advance sharing. Then recommendations from the MAG should be implemented.

Area Planning

The recent consultation process on area-based planning did not convince CRC that due consideration had been given to the legislative and policy commitments e.g. Programme for Government (PfG) commitments to 'substantially increase the number of schools sharing facilities by 2015', Together: Building a United Community (TBUC) commitments of creating 10 Shared Campuses, DE's CRED policy and enhancement scheme, area learning communities and the suite of projects supported by external supporters. Area based planning should require schools to explore options for sharing, with a clear public preference for those options which promote normalised interaction and engagement. Embracing this as a priority will help deliver a schools estate that meets the needs of children in all localities.

Facilitative Dialogue

Where schools are at risk of being closed or new schools are planned, local communities should be kept fully informed of the opportunity for possible collaborations. Wide scale direct debate with parents and children should be encouraged and facilitated at area based planning level. A deliberative poll exercise took place in Omagh in 2007 which facilitated discussions between parents on models of education provision in their locality. The final report revealed that people wanted more sharing with 71% specifically stating that they would support integrated education[19]. Those responsible for planning the schools estate should proactively engage with parents and the wider community and examine all options for increased sharing on a cross-community sectoral basis.

Legislation

Appropriate legislation should be developed to ensure shared education is strategically advanced. CRC called for amendments to the current bill regarding the promotion of Shared Education during the Committee Stage of the Bill. Furthermore, the MAG Report included a definition of shared education. This needs to be translated into law.

It is important the Committee inquiry consider current Assembly deliberations on the current bill, as well as any future legislation.

Barriers

Legacy

Our historical context and the legacy of the conflict are other obvious barriers, and it is clear current levels of communal segregation in our society are reflected within the education estate. For example, QUB research (2009) reported that children and young people from

---

19   http://cdd.standford.edu/polls/nireland/2007/omagh-report.pdf

six communities still remained significantly affected by the conflict and that *"violence has remained a part of everyday life for children and young people living in communities defined by uncertainty, unease and the continued presence of paramilitaries and dissidents"*[20]. Dealing with the past remains a huge problem for the youth of our society, and despite the experience of relative peace by many children and young people, the traditions of the past continue to impact on their lives.

Teachers have also noted concerns about the impact of sectarianism[21] on pupil relationships. This poses a potential threat to interaction and could result in avoiding or minimising this type of engagement because of the risk factor.

Policy

Integrated and shared education policy must be viewed as a part of the family of strategic policies – they are crucial in the long-term process of normalising interaction and meaningful engagement.

Area planning proposals were weak regarding shared and integrated education. Many options for mergers and collaborations were proposed on a cross-sectoral basis, but there were few on a cross-community basis. A generic commitment to 'collaboration' cannot be allowed to disguise the imperative for inter-sectoral sharing. It is noteworthy that responses to the SIEP evaluation indicated that *'less than half of respondents from all school sectors felt that current education policy supported cross-sectoral collaboration'*, despite the fact that *'a majority of all head teachers agreed that schools should promote better relations'*[22]. This is requires urgent attention.

In addition to the above comments regarding drivers and challenges CRC has the following recommendations to make. There should be:

Legislation

■ A statutory duty on schools to promote good relations;

■ A duty to fully consider sharing and collaboration in school development plans:

Policy

■ An endorsement of previous recommendations, on the re-structuring and re-organisation of educational structures which explicitly encourage interaction between young people and contribute to the reconciliation of our communities and improve educational outcomes for all children;

■ Develop guidance on sharing and collaboration for area based planning;

■ Place a responsibility on boards (Education Authority) and governors to adhere to policy commitments regarding good relations issues and ensure these are reflected in area-based plans;

---

20   Haydon, D., McAlister, S., Scraton, P. (2009) Childhood in Transition Experiencing Marginalisation and Conflict in Northern Ireland. QUB, Save the Children, The Prince's Trust

21   'Teachers specifically suggested that they were worried about pupil sectarianism or general hostility between pupils', SCHOOL PARTNERSHIPS AND RECONCILIATION: AN EVALUATION OF SCHOOL COLLABORATION IN NORTHERN IRELAND, Project Team: Prof Joanne Hughes, Dr Caitlin Donnelly, Prof Miles Hewstone, Prof Tony Gallagher & Dr Karen Carlisle December 2010, Page 41. http://www.schoolsworkingtogether.co.uk/reports.html

22   http://www.schoolsworkingtogether.co.uk/documents/School%20collaboration%20in%20NI%202010.pdf Page 32.

- Undertake an audit of current activity - what is being achieved, where and why sharing is not occurring and seek to identify barriers, as well as suggesting programmes to progress this lack of work[23].

- Consider the amalgamation premium in the common funding formula policy and explore how it could support collaborative approaches;

- Carry out audits to identify geographical areas for potential growth and changes in public attitudes;

Practice

- Strategic political leadership is needed to ensure the teaching and practice of good relations is successfully mainstreamed across all schools;

- Enabling a culture change. Good practice should be shared and publicised, and a culture of co-operation and partnership between schools and colleges encouraged;

- Practice and research must influence strategic policy;

- There should be a greater focus on sharing and collaboration within service delivery and the allocation of resources;

- Commit long-term and appropriate budget to support good relations activity across all levels of formal education;

- Develop a transitional programme including guidance relating to models for consulting on and how best to pursue sharing and collaboration. Adequate resources and a realistic timeframe will be needed to assess how suitable the models are to a particular area. Work with board of governors, parents and the wider community should be a central part of this change programme;

- Developmental programmes should be devised and implemented where non-sharing activity is identified. This should be linked to performance and inspections;

- Targeted support and resources - additional targeted support and resources for those schools in areas that continue to experience considerable community conflict, segregation and disadvantage;

- Ethos and identity issues should be dealt with using the UNCRC framework;

- A whole schools approach should be used which includes working with parents and the wider community;

- The curriculum should act as a critical lever for ensuring safety, welfare, dignity and respect in relation to personal understanding, citizenship and cultural understanding;

- Capacity building. Relevant regulatory and training bodies should include compulsory components of study on good relations in their training programmes;

- Stronger collaboration between teacher-training institutions to ensure all student teachers have the opportunity to experience the different sectors and ethos, via the exchange of learning and conducting some practice in another sector;

- Up-dated resources and materials for good relations work should be actively developed by DE, NI Curriculum and CCEA;

- Utilise external support and institutional knowledge to bring added value to internal practices;

---

23   It must be stressed that a significant amount of this information is should be currently available from departmental and external sources but it would be a useful exercise to assemble it in one place. Importantly this scoping exercise would ensure that those involved in all types of sharing, or those who want to explore opportunities, can access the relevant information and be given the support to have that conversation.

- Non-accredited benefits - creating opportunities for engagement that develop trust, relationships, and improving educational achievement can help create transferable skills that are needed to create and maintain harmonious work environments and cohesive communities;

- Evaluation. Develop a monitoring and evaluation framework that measures levels of collaboration and cooperation between local schools. This should be linked to performance and inspection, and should be published yearly;

The above is a series of suggestions that, if adopted across the various strategic and institutional structures, could positively impact on peace building and reconciliation within the current educational provision. They would also support the development of more formal and stable relationships thereby delivering longer and more sustainable outcomes.

Conclusion

Educational structures have already experimented in collaboration and partnership on a range of curriculum and extra curriculum activities, as well as between schools, pupils, teachers, institutions, and parents. It is important to set the work of this inquiry in this context. Clearly sharing, collaboration and integration are taking place, but the desire and aspiration for more is compelling and it is clear more needs to be done. The Committee should reflect on current provision, the vision and what needs to be done to support the development of this current practice over a sustained period.

CRC welcomes the opportunity to make this submission and would welcome the opportunity to engage with the Committee on this important aspect of peace and reconciliation.

Contact: Gemma Attwood, Policy Development Officer, Community Relations Council

Email: gattwood@nicrc.org.uk

Appendix 1

Rights agenda

Firstly, as a backdrop to this Inquiry it is useful to reflect on the range of international obligations that intersect with educational policy development and practice such as Article 29: United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child[24], *Article 6: Framework Convention on National Minorities*[25]*, Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights*[26], and Article 13(1) International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights which 'recognize the right of everyone to education. They agree that education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and the sense of its dignity, and shall strengthen the respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. They further agree that education shall enable all persons to participate effectively in a free society, promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations and all racial, ethnic or religious groups, and further the activities of the united nations for the maintenance of peace'[27]. The Council of Europe's 2007 White Paper 'living together as equals in dignity' drew attention to the role of education in supporting and enabling intercultural dialogue. It highlighted the need to learn the competencies that would promote intercultural dialogue[28]. Finally, it is important to reflect on the concluding observations from the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child (2008) which recorded its concern regarding "the problem of segregated education" and called on government to take measures to address segregation of education in Northern Ireland[29].

---

24   Article 29 (1) "States Parties agree that the education of the child shall be directed to: "(c) The development of respect for the child's parents, his or her own cultural identity, language and values, for the national values of the country in which the child is living, the country from which he or she may originate, and for civilizations different from his or her own; "(d) The preparation of the child for responsible life in a free society, in the spirit of understanding, peace, tolerance, equality of sexes, and friendship among all peoples, ethnic, national and religious groups and persons of indigenous origin; UN (1989) United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child UN: Geneva.

25   http://conventions.coe.int/Treaty/en/Treaties/Html/157.htm

26   (1) Everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory. Technical and professional education shall be made generally available and higher education shall be equally accessible to all on the basis of merit.

       (2) Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups, and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace.

       (3) Parents have a prior right to choose the kind of education that shall be given to their children; http://www.un.org/en/documents/udhr/index.shtml#a26

27   http://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/CESCR.aspx

28   Living Together as Equals in Dignity. Council of Europe. 2007. http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/intercultural/source/white%20paper_final_revised_en.pdf

29   October 2008 - COMMITTEE ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD, Forty-ninth session, CONSIDERATION OF REPORTS SUBMITTED BY STATES PARTIES UNDER ARTICLE 44 OF THE CONVENTION Concluding observations:UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN AND NORTHERN IRELAND. http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/crc/docs/AdvanceVersions/CRC.C.GBR.CO.4.pdf

Appendix 2

Legislation

Ultimately legislation sets the direction for the development of policy that will enforce the legislation. The key legal instruments that can influence how children are educated together include the *Education (Northern Ireland) Act 1978/ Education (Northern Ireland) Order 1984*[30]*; Education Reform (Northern Ireland) Order 1989,*[31]; *Education (Norther*n Ireland) Order 2006[32]. Further educational reform is progressing under the *education bill.*

Policy

There are a wide range of policies in existence that impact and influence this current debate. The *Programme for Government 2011-2015* includes a number of commitments regarding shared education including a commitment to ensuring that all children have the opportunity to participate in shared education programmes by 2015; to substantially increase the number of schools sharing facilities by 2015; and to establish a ministerial advisory group to explore and bring forward recommendations to the minister of education to advance shared education[33]

(Report delivered 2013).

The Executive's 'Together Building a United Community' (TBUC) includes a number of goals relevant to education including summer camps/summer schools, a "buddy scheme" in publicly run nursery and primary schools; and development of age-appropriate primary and post-primary anti-sectarianism resources. However of major significance is the commitment to 'create ten shared educational campuses'[34]. To date applications have been sought and 3 have been approved. A further call is expected in the near future.

The Department of Education's *Corporate Plan for Education 2012-2015* clearly identifies its relationship with the PfG stating that 'our focus will be on ensuring that every young person achieves to his or her full potential and on maximising the contribution that education can make to shaping a strong and shared community and delivering sustainable economic growth' and will 'promote opportunities for shared learning for pupils in schools in all sectors and all parts of the north'[35]

---

30   Controlled integrated status was introduced in the Education (Northern Ireland) Act 1978 and later incorporated into the Education (Northern Ireland) Order 1984 "in order to facilitate the establishment of schools likely to be attended by pupils of different religious affiliations or cultural traditions"

31   clause 64—(1) 'It shall be the duty of the Department to encourage and facilitate the development of integrated education, that is to say the education together at school of Protestant and Roman Catholic pupils'http://cain.ulst. ac.uk/csc/reports/fraser99d.htm

32   Provided the broad legislative framework to implement the revised statutory curriculum, to give effect to aspects of the new arrangements for post-primary education, including the curricular Entitlement Framework and powers to introduce new admissions arrangements.

33   http://www.northernireland.gov.uk/pfg

34   http://www.ofmdfmni.gov.uk/together-building-a-united-community

35   In particular Corporate Goal 4 commits to 'Improving the learning environment' and undertakes to deliver and support an environment that 'provides opportunities for sharing and for building a more cohesive society' via the following objectives: Ensure all children have the opportunity to participate in shared education programmes by 2015; Substantially increase the number of schools sharing facilities by 2015; Significantly progress work on the plan for the Lisanelly Shared Education Campus as a key regeneration project. http://www.deni.gov.uk/de_corporate_plan_2012_english.pdf

Furthermore, the *Community Relations, Equality and Diversity (CRED) Policy*[36] has as its vision that it will '*contribute to improving relations between communities by educating children and young people to develop self-respect and respect for others, promote equality and work to eliminate discrimination, and by providing formal and non-formal education opportunities for them to build relationships with those of different backgrounds and traditions within the resources available*".

It is important to note that the CRED policy enhancement scheme operates under a significantly reduced budgetary heading from its predecessor with an approximate 70% reduction in financial support. The recent good relations indicators revealed that under the CRED enhancement scheme (2011/2012) 12,164 (3.8%) of children were involved participating in community relations activities which equated to 249 (20.6%) schools. The previous policy which had been operational until 2009/10 involved 30, 997children (10%) equalling 468 schools (38%)[37].

Other areas of educational policy relevant to this Inquiry include the *Revised Northern Ireland Curriculum,* the *Religious Education Core Syllabus,* the *Entitlement Framework*[38]*,* Furthermore all post-primary schools are members of area learning communities which provide an opportunity to maximise the capacity of schools to deliver the entitlement framework via collaborative arrangements and a departmental circular 2013/10 - *delivering the entitlement framework* drew attention to financial support/incentives for this collaborative approach[39] (there is no official information available as to the extent of cross-community sectoral collaboration).

Other strategic policies which, whilst not having a specific community relations angle, have a significant role to play in supporting and developing community relations within the educational arena such as '*Schools for the future: policy for sustainble schools' (2009)* which has as its vision a schools estate of educationally sustainable schools planned on an area basis, with a focus on sharing and collaboration. It states that the education sector will want to 'uphold an education system that plays a powerful and positive role in the normalising of society, helping to make it sustainable and vibrant, with greater sharing amongst communities'; other policies include *Every School a Good School (2009)*; *Area-based planning, and* the *Common Funding Formula* referred to an amalgamation premium, but it is unclear what type of amalgamation this referred to i.e. inter or intra-sectoral.

---

36   Its three main objectives focus on children and young people as the beneficiaries. It wants to ensure all learners 'have an understanding of and respect for the rights, equality and diversity of all without discrimination'; to educate children and young people to live and participate in a changing world, so that they value and respect difference and engage positively with it, taking account of the ongoing intercommunity divisions arising from conflict and increasing diversity within our society; and finally to equip children and young people with the skills, attitudes and behaviours needed to develop mutual understanding and recognition of, and respect for, differencehttp://www.credni.org/contents/what-is-cred/

37   Good Relations Indicators 2012 Update; OFMDFM; 2013. http://www.ofmdfmni.gov.uk/gr-indicators-2012-update

38   The legislation bringing the Entitlement Framework into operation applies from 1 September 2013.

39   http://www.deni.gov.uk/14-19_cet_2013_14_ef_circular__english_version_.pdf

Appendix 3

Good Relations Forum: Ensuring the Good Relations Work in our Schools Counts - A Strategy to meet our needs for the 21st century (April 2010), CRC& ECNI.

School and local level:

- Compulsory good relations programmes in schools;

- Good practice to be shared and publicised;

- Capacity building programmes for existing school teaching staff;

- Capacity building of parents and local communities;

- Keeping local communities fully informed of the opportunity for possible collaboration, where schools are at risk of being closed or new schools are planned.

Strategic level:

- Strategic leadership - the Minister of Education and the Department of Education to give greater strategic direction to the schools sector to ensure that the teaching and practice of good relations is successfully mainstreamed across all schools.

- Culture change - by creating a culture of co-operation, partner schools and colleges can bring considerable resources and skills that both add value to the learning experiences of children and young people, and crucially, help schools to do things differently.

- Budget commitment to good relations programmes - the Department ofEducation to identify and commit a long-term and appropriate budget to supporting all schools to provide good relations modules within citizenship programmes.

- Good relations lens – the entire curriculum to be good relations proofed, at least in those subject areas where it is both relevant and appropriate to do so.

- Targeted support and resources - the Department and ESA to offer more targeted support and resources for those schools in areas that continue to experience considerable community conflict, segregation and disadvantage.

- Greater focus on sharing and collaboration within service delivery - the Department, ESA and other key educational stakeholders to focus on maximising value for money and avoiding duplication of educational provision, by placing a greater focus on existing drivers, policies and practices that encourage greater sharing and collaboration, particularly on a cross-community basis.

- Developing tools that measure change – the Department to develop a set of targets, as well as a monitoring and evaluation framework to measure the changes to the level of collaboration and cooperation between local schools. This should be published yearly and publicised widely.

- Teacher, head teacher and governor training - the Department to ensure that amendments are made to the various training programmes by relevant regulatory and training bodies, making good relations modules compulsory components of study.

- Greater sharing and collaboration between teacher training colleges – the Department and ESA to encourage stronger collaboration between the different teacher training institutions, to ensure all student teachers, whatever their community background, have the appropriate time and opportunity to experience other sectors and school ethos. All initial teacher training courses/programmes to encompass an element of teaching from different sectors on a cross-community basis.

- Mapping future opportunities - audits would help identify geographical areas for potential growth in integrated or shared education and changes in public attitudes, thus, providing a strategic context within which the transformation of schools might take place.

■ A generic commitment to 'collaboration' cannot be allowed to disguise the imperative for inter-sectoral sharing which must result. Of course, some schools will have more opportunities than others to engage on a cross-community basis and there are already a number of schools delivering this in practice. However without an obligation to explore all options some schools may opt out of this opportunity. This collaboration cannot be allowed to occur on an ad- hoc basis - this could simply come down to it being easier to engage/collaborate cross sector (not cross community) and also happen at the discretion of board of governors or the principal.

Concerned Parent

Open Letter to Committee Integrated Education

I am not an 'academic', I am not politically minded and I am not particularly religious. Yes I have my faith as such but that's about as far as it goes.

What I am is a single mum with a demanding job and two fantastic kids. My children are now 19yrs and 15 yrs old and I would do practically anything within my power for them. I made a very conscious decision that they would be educated in an environment free (well as free as can be expected) from sectarianism and tribalism as possible.

My own upbringing was one of working class with two fantastic parents who happened to be protestant Christians. However, my life was interjected with bombs, needless killings and my mother wanted to know my every move. 'in case I got caught up in an incident!!'. My parents were unionist voters, a fact I only became aware of in my late twenties, but had friends from all walks of life. As my mother worked in Community Development she had worked quite a bit with ex prisoners and some would like to call themselves 'combatants'.

I went to Methodist College, which in some way was 'integrated' even back then, with me having friends from Hong Kong and Dubai.

I have seen the destruction that sectarianism can cause to children. They hate, they fear and they don't respect and it breaks my heart that these kids are missing out on so much of life as my kids know. How do I know this for a fact? I have been a Police Officer for 25 years, working in North and West Belfast, the worst area for bitterness, youth crime and segregation in the North of Ireland! Yes, class, unemployment etc does have their impact, but these kids aren't being given the opportunity to experience the 'other side'.

When I sent my kids to Lagan College, it was to try to reinforce what I had already been teaching them - that we in some ways are all the same yet different and it's OK to embrace the differences.

I have seen the Pastoral care given by Lagan, they 'care' for the kids in their 7 hrs/day control. I admire the staff for wanting to give every child the opportunity to be the best they can be in life. I have seen that they are FULLY integrated – what I'm trying to say is Protestant, Catholic, Seikh, atheist, muslim, able bodied, disabled, girls boys and those in between, rich, poor and all colours sit side by side in class. Gifted and talented, and those academically challenged are all given the opportunity to be the best they can. This is where other schools fail miserably. There isn't that diversity encompassed in one learning location.

My kids have grown up with friends from every part of the City – Cregagh estate, Ladybrook and even rural areas such as Ballywalter. They have experienced a full life, swapping stories, life experiences and most of all RESPECTING others. They have come to realise that just because Conal lives at the bottom of the Ormeau Road, it doesn't mean he is an IRA sympathiser, its fine that Orla speaks fluent Irish – but this does not mean she is intending to disregard English and force everyone to speak Irish! They learn that by embracing the differences, we can actually move forward and that, is something which this wee country really needs.

It has saddened me greatly to that certain political parties and academics are not 100% behind Integrated Education. What are they afraid of?? Why do they not want to offer these experiences to the kids of today and tomorrow? For them to block this opportunity for our youth is tantamount to criminal in my eyes!

I read an article that only 6% of kids go to a recognised integrated school – and this was pounced on by CCMS, however, the CCMS did not take into consideration how many of those other 94% would have attended an Integrated school IF THE CHOICE was available.

As I say, Im not an academic or politically motivated, I just care about this wee country's future. I care about the kids and I would love to see at some stage other kids experience the same as my kids have been fortunate to.

I know it will take time and money to implement these changes however, these are changes which must be made as a RIGHT for families to decide that they want their kids to be educated in an all-inclusive environment. Again I say to the opposers of this – What exactly ARE you afraid of???

Corrymeela Community

For the NI Education Committee
"Inquiry into Shared and Integrated Education"

The Corrymeela Community is pleased to respond to some of the terms of reference the Education Committee has been asked to consider.
We would be pleased to share our experience with the Committee, if members so wished, at some later date.

The Corrymeela Community, founded in 1965, as a cross community reconciliation organisation, has continuously initiated diverse Schools Community Relations Programmes since 1966, using a mixture of its own charitably donated resources as well as support from a variety of philanthropic, public and peace funding sources.

Within the Membership of this voluntary organisation we have many educational practitioners associated with Mutual Understanding, Shared Education and Integrated Education.

We have a number of Higher Education Lecturing Staff who have been involved in the professional formation of: teachers, educational managers, Boards of Governors and Principals.

We have a number of school principals, senior school staff and experienced teachers promoting mutual understanding, citizenship, shared and integrated approaches.

Additionally there are now many youth workers, in full time and voluntary community relations practice, who developed their interest in this work through volunteering or being engaged with reconciliation practice at our residential centre over the past 49 years.

The Context
Education in an ethnic frontier society such as ours can readily become a contested theme for people from all traditions. How different people and traditions view education needs to be more widely understood by us all, if we are to really focus on how we build a system centred on:

- the personal, social, intellectual and spiritual development of our children and young people;
- enabling them to embrace a shared future together, with diverse others;
- engaging parents and carers, from all backgrounds and traditions, as partners in this enterprise;
- support professional teaching staff, support staff, management and Boards of Governors work to the fullest possibilities offered to us through the current and exciting Northern Ireland Curriculum.

In view of the different educational providers and the current structures that exist in Northern Ireland, it is important that all initiatives that seek to promote an openness to difference, sharing or integration are welcomed and supported.

It is also important that all educational work is subjected to quality challenges around the extent to which they are explicit about working to reconstruct this society as one characterised by mutual respect and a willingness to share a common life together-

1

between children, young people and adults-in this society.

We welcome all contributions that fully, promote sharing and integration and we are working to promote such a supportive culture around our schools. Schools have a central role in assisting us become a shared, mutually respectful and united society. This goal is a task for adults to drive forward.

We ask our own members and staff, and others also, to challenge a tolerance of 'compliance' that only offers minimal responses to the demands of public policy to promote CRED policies. Minimal responses, with no depth of 'a commitment culture' that promotes a more open and shared society, have little place or right to call on public financial support. Our children and young people deserve better.

A. Responding under your terms of reference: "Identify the key barriers and enablers for Shared Education and Integrated Education"

For us:
A 1. There is a need for an open, shared examination between all parties about the fears and dynamics associated with the control of education.

We attach a detailed political history of education analysis by our late member, Professor Frank Wright, published by us some years ago.

This text, together with the detailed historical appendix on 'Education and National Division in Ireland' since the early 19th Century, is an important reminder about the fears and dynamics associated with the control of education.

In Frank's analysis of: separate education, possibly being a means of managing distrust; and integrated education, possibly offering possibilities for reconciling diverse national traditions; he cautions us all to think carefully about making education a political football to serve diverse and opposing traditions and a way of stopping the needs and talents of our children and young people remaining the focus of public policy.

A 2. If the ethos of our schools is not primarily one of trust, then all schooling engagements between pupils from different traditions will be charged with a fear of assimilation.

Drawing on his experience of living in Britain, the former Yugoslavia and Northern Ireland, Frank argues that, in contested societies, histories are about relationships that are always charged with anxiety or tension in the present moment, whereas those living in more stable societies do not have this experience.

He argues that the different traditions and sectors need to understand the dynamics they are too readily caught up in and take courage to move out from them and beyond.
Such a move would be a signal of mature political leadership (Shriver)

A 3. A need to offer culturally appropriate education within a united, shared, future vision

2

the **Corrymeela**
community

embracing difference | healing division | enabling reconciliation

Wright argued that "the most important principle to uphold is the parents right to choose a culturally appropriate education for their children - state, catholic, integrated, irish or free presbyterian- where possible, to look for a way of expressing these needs on a united basis."

He argues for this united approach between the different sectors.

A 4. It is important that the 1998 internationally guaranteed political agreement that addressed integrated education is honoured.

In *"Integrated Education: A Review of Policy and Research Evidence 1999-2012"*, Hansson and his colleagues argue that:

"In terms of education policy, the concept of integrated education was endorsed in the Belfast (Good Friday) Agreement,..., but later Executive documents, such as the strategy for Cohesion Sharing and Integration Consultation Document (July 2010) and the Northern Ireland Programme for Government (2011-2015) avoid any direct references to integrated education and the role it will play in future policy.

Current educational reform, such as the Education Bill (2012) ...do not refer directly to integrated education or to the duty of the Department of Education to 'encourage and facilitate the development of integrated education'. Instead, there is an emphasis on sharing in education and 'integrating education' rather than a policy to increase the number of integrated schools.

A Ministerial Advisory Group on Advancing Shared Education was established in 2012 as part of the Programme for Government (2011-15), but there is no explicit reference to integrated education within its mandate."

A 5. In our experience one most significant barrier is the resistance of professional educators to engage together in exploring sensitive and challenging societal issues around history, identity and beliefs with colleagues from different political, cultural and religious traditions. It is not primarily the attitudes of parents, carers or children and young people.

Of course we recognise the excellent work of many educators in this area. However, in spite of this body of forward-looking educators, in our experience we have encountered some professional educators as a major challenge.

This is compounded by:
- A still limited embedding of dealing with sensitive issues within the Higher Education training of teachers in our Universities and Colleges;
- The limiting of Continuous Professional Training opportunities that means teachers from diverse sectors do not meet together **(Note: In Scotland each teacher has four to five Continuous Professional Development Days Annually, as a commitment to supporting their children and young people)**;

Since 1969 the Department of Education has often supported Mutual Understanding work, however this work has primarily been funded by local charitable organisations, the externally offered Peace Funds and International

3

embracing difference | healing division | enabling reconciliation

- philanthropy.

There is a need for a central public budget to be established that supports this work and a government reliance on philanthropy stopped;
- There are now very limited opportunities to explicitly engage with the sensitive themes around Mutual Understanding issues due to a lack of core Public Budgets in this area;
- This area of work needs prioritised and embedded within the in-service training of experienced teachers, middle and senior management.

A 6. The Peace Agreement of 1998 and subsequent agreements were forged out of many strands of political and civil society actions. Central to these experiences were experiences of politicians being away from home or living with one another at residential venues.

As an educational model of change the residential experience, being with one another, out of our normal space, is one way in which we meet one another deeply. If this experience was essential to the wider peace processes, it remains essential to the future formation of children, young people and adults, many of whom still live quite separate lives.

The work of Sharing and Integrating will be enhanced if resources for residentially meeting together are prioritised.

B. Responding under your terms of reference:
"Identify and analyse alternative approaches and models of good practice in other jurisdictions in terms of policy interventions and programmes"

In our experience Northern Ireland has been a lead in developing twinning approaches between schools that other societies could and do learn from.

We would caution the Committee from, too readily, looking elsewhere at the expense of gathering the accumulated experience developed within this jurisdiction. As an aid to this internal knowledge we offer the following examples:

B 1 Since 1940, the early attempts by Dan Mc Call and John Malone with the National Council of YMCA Programmes for young boys from areas of social deprivation.

B 2 Since 1966:
The experience of Corrymeela in developing, long lasting, **twinning programmes** between secondary schools and grammar schools around Mutual Understanding that started before the civil conflict and continued through the worst years of the violence. For example in areas such as Rathcoole; East Belfast-Armagh; Dungannon; North Down; Ballymena; Omagh; Craigavon; Coleraine; Derry/ Londonderry.

The provision of **four-day residential teacher development courses** at Corrymeela around systemic and curricular developments around promoting and sustaining Mutual Understanding.

4

The development of primary school partnerships in areas of social deprivation addressing poverty and underachievement, some of which were supported by Corrymeela fieldwork / teaching staff.

The provision of **Forgiveness Education and Religious Education** Resources on peace building and reconciliation.

B 3 The current Corrymeela Community **'Facing our History, Shaping the Future'** Programme, developed jointly with a US Education Partner.

We have developed this excellent programme over the last years, highly commended by the ETI Inspectors. Together with teacher and student resources this programme, originally funded through the IFI 'Shared Education' initiative, has been curtailed. The programme is very relevant to all Secondary Level Schools.

At present this programme has reached 60% of all post Primary Schools in Northern Ireland. However as we have no substantial long term funding against this project, this is preventing us from releasing its full potential. Currently we are using our charitable resources to augment this work.

B 4 Since 1969 the **Schools Community Relations Programme,** established with King George VI charitable funding and supported by the (then) Ministry of Education under the direction of John Malone. This led to **the development of a Schools Support Service,** then based in QUB but ended in the 1980's.

B 5 In the 1970's many programmes of community relations based school work were developed. These are explored in the recent work of Norman Richardson and Tony Gallagher and in the writings of Alan Smith, Alan Mc Cully, Gerry Tyrell, Alan Robinson and others.
(See Norman Richardson, Tony Gallagher Education for Diversity and Mutual Understanding: the Experience of Northern Ireland. Bern: Peter Lang.)

C Responding under your terms of reference: "Consider what priorities and actions need to be taken to improve sharing and integration – including the effectiveness of the relevant parts of the CRED policy; the need to engage more effectively with parents/carers; and the role of Special Schools"

C 1 In our experience terms such as: reconciliation, mutual understanding and human rights; community relations, equality and diversity (CRED); are terms that should be both structurally promoted and relationally experienced.

This means that systemic approaches to colleges and schools embedding fair treatment, acknowledging diversity and promoting a sense of interdependence between staff, parents and students from diverse backgrounds and traditions need promoted within the daily codes, rituals and working practices of those institutions, as well as within the Department of Education itself.

Alongside these structural supports for Sharing and Integration there needs to be a

5

relational culture developed between all the interested parties in their day to day interaction and engagement with one another.

In such daily relational events and structures new ways of being with one another; new ways of speaking respectfully about and acknowledging 'different others' who belong to this society, but who may not be in that particular school, are repeated daily, structured and eventually become "the ways things are done here".

C 2 The Need for Systemic Changes in Structures that promote Sharing and Integration as core themes.

Some years ago Corrymeela developed a manual on such approaches called 'Joined Up'. This manual offers a way for schools, systemically and relationally, to develop their resilience and support to processes that support both sharing and integration.

We wish to engage with pilot schools further around this systemic change approach. *(The Joined Up material was made available to the GTCNI Research Repository. This resource base is now closed down-we are arranging to have a disc copy sent to the Committee.)*

As a responsible charity committed to promoting reconciliation, we have currently committed major charitable resources to support informal and formal education that supports sharing and integration.

We are currently reviewing our schools, youth, family, volunteering, faith and inter-cultural work, with a view to launching a new platform of transformative education models of practice that support learning for a new, mutual and shared future.

Sometimes alone, and often with different partners, we hope this will develop specific practices that, adequately documented and researched, will be capable of multiplication across the pre-school, primary, secondary, further and higher and adult education sectors.

Whether these are shared or integrated approaches will depend on the participants and each context. However what is clear to us is that they will be an expression of our commitment to work to promote a more open, shared and respectful society based on fair treatment, a respect for difference and a wish to build interdependent relationships between all citizens in this society.

C 3 All educational spaces have an opportunity to promote or dilute CRED.

In all schools where there are elements of shared or integrated governance, such spaces offer society, and citizens, foundation blocks for taking many of us beyond the more seductive and familiar comfort of our separate traditions and backgrounds.

Therefore all shared and integrated Boards need affirmed and encouraged to go further in the quality of their engagement and risk taking that supports a more open shared society.

C4 Promoting Restorative School Cultures

6

the Corrymeela community

embracing difference | healing division | enabling reconciliation

We are considering the potential of the concept of Restorative Schools as a transcending umbrella that could engage schools from all the sectors in a common programme of work that builds the values and processes we think are central to a shared and mutually respectful society, and which are needed by children, young people and adults.

Drawing on experiences of some members and staff with schools in New Zealand, South Africa, Canada, the United States, the Republic of Ireland, the County of Lancashire and in Scotland, to name only a few, we are convinced that:

- The quality of relationships between pupils, staff, parents and governors can be enhanced;
- Community engagement affirmed;
- Pupil attainment, teacher confidence and safety, and parental participation increased, through such an approach.
(See some resources on this work below).

We repeat again how important it is that we urgently promote diverse manners of structural and relational work that builds a more open, shared, and future oriented inclusive society based on mutual respect and, eventually trust between diverse people.

To support this visionary task, the promotion of shared and integrated educational structures are important, as they will bring quality experiences of being at ease with different others to staff, parents, carers, children and young people, as members of these enterprises.

Yours sincerely

Colin Craig   S Mc Ewen   Dr D Wilson
Executive Director   Head of Programmes   Chair
Corrymeela Community   Corrymeela Community   Programme Committee
                                                         Corrymeela Community

Appendix 1:

Corrymeela Resources we offer to the Committee:
Integrated Education and New Beginnings in Northern Ireland
by (the late) Professor Frank Wright, a Member of the Corrymeela Community.
(To be sent by disc)

Joined Up: Developing Good Relations in the School Community, Mary Potter & Nichola Lynagh,
(2005) Belfast: Corrymeela Press.
(To be sent by disc)

The Facing History and Ourselves Programme resources.
Teacher materials and Video resources: http://www.storiesofcourage.net/#/contact/4576241132

7

the Corrymeela community

embracing difference | healing division | enabling reconciliation

Appendix 1: Other Corrymeela Resources:

Learning about reconciliation-schools and mutual understanding work

Sheelagh Dean and Sean Pettis (2013) Key Stage 3 History Scheme of Work: Investigate the long and short term causes and consequences of the partition of Ireland and how it has influenced Northern Ireland today including key events and turning points'. Belfast; Corrymeela Press,

Jon Hatch, Karen Murphy, Sean Pettis (2013) Up Standing: Stories of courage from Northern Ireland –Educators Guide. Belfast: Corrymeela Press

Yvonne Naylor (2001) Moving beyond Sectarianism – a resource for young people 14-18 Irish school of Ecumenics;

Yvonne Naylor (2003) Who We Are: Dealing with Difference: a resource for children and young people 9-14, Irish school of Ecumenics

Yvonne Naylor (2006) Stepping Out: a resource for diversity and inclusion for teachers, leaders and children 5-9 years old, Irish school of Ecumenics
Available from the N.I. Curriculum website in both RE and PDMU areas of learning. See:-
http://www.nicurriculum.org.uk/key_stages_1_and_2/areas_of_learning/pdmu

Restorative Schools-A few Articles

Campbell, H, McCord, J, Chapman, T and Wilson, D (2013) *Developing a Whole System Approach to Embedding restorative practices in YouthReach Youth Work and Schools in County Donegal.* County Donegal Vocational Education Committee. University of Ulster and Co. Donegal ETB Restorative Practices Project. 44 pp.

Drewery, W. 2004, Restorative Practices for Schools: A Resource. 1st edn, School of Education, University of Waikato., Hamilton, N.Z.

Flanagan, H., 2010, Restorative Approaches in Schools Guidance Document 1st edn, Lancashire County Council, Lancashire.

Hendry, R. 2009, Building and Restoring Respectful Relationships in Schools: A Guide to Restorative Practice, Routledge, London

Hopkins, B. 2004, *Just schools: a whole school approach to restorative justice*, Jessica Kingsley, London.

McCluskey, Gillean, Sellman, Ed and Cremin, Hilary (eds) Restorative Approaches to Conflict in Schools. Interdisciplinary perspectives on whole school approaches to managing relationships, Routledge, Abingdon, Oxon & New York, pp. 59-74.

Morrison, B., Practising Restorative Justice in School Communities: The Challenge of Culture Change, Public Organisational Review, A Global Journal 5, 335-357, (2005)

Scottish Government evidence on Restorative Approaches in Schools. see
http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2007/08/24093135/0

http://www.teachersmedia.co.uk/videos/restorative-justice-in-schools

DÚN LAOGHAIRE / RATHDOWN COMENIUS REGIO 'RESTORATIVE APPROACHES' PROGRAMME2010-2011-A FORMATIVE EVALUATION. 81 pp.

8

joined-up

Developing Good Relations in the School Community

673

THE CORRYMEELA COMMUNITY

nicie
NORTHERN IRELAND COUNCIL FOR INTEGRATED EDUCATION
Educating Children Together

Department of
Education
www.deni.gov.uk

INTERNATIONAL FUND FOR IRELAND

THE IRELAND FUNDS

joined-up

Developing Good Relations in the School Community

Nichola Lynagh & Mary Potter

This resource seeks to promote effective teaching and learning practice, and to provide guidance for exploring some of the more controversial issues which emerge in ways that are appropriate, safe, and create positive learning experiences.

Grateful acknowledgements must go to everyone who assisted in the development of this resource.

676

The promotion of good relations is about breaking through the denial and avoidance of the Northern Ireland conflict and acknowledging its impact on the community and organisations working within it. It is also about actively recognising the challenges faced by people in Northern Ireland who are members of minority ethnic communities and minority religious faiths and the additional difficulties that they may encounter. Good Relations challenges sectarianism and racism, promotes equality, develops respect for diversity and raises awareness of the interdependence of the people and institutions within Northern Ireland. It states a public commitment to these beliefs and continually seeks ways to build on them for the future.

DEFINITION DEVELOPED BY THE NORTHERN IRELAND COMMUNITY RELATIONS COUNCIL.

contents

Introduction

SECTION ONE
Understanding the Context
Teaching and Learning in a Contested Society

SECTION TWO
Creating an Inclusive Learning Community
A Whole School Approach

SECTION THREE
Building a Positive Learning Environment
Using Groupwork and Facilitation

SECTION FOUR
Exploring Controversial Issues

681

💡 Introduction

introduction

What is the purpose of the resource?

- To support schools in developing a whole school approach to building good relations throughout their school community.

- To provide school senior managers, teachers and teacher educators with guidance and resources to support them in developing effective active learning approaches for exploring controversial and difficult issues with children, young people and adults.

- To encourage you, as school senior managers, teachers and teacher educators, to reflect on your own understanding and ongoing learning as you consider how best to enable children, young people and adults within school communities to explore these themes.

Schools are situated at the heart of communities, playing a crucial part in the lives of children, young people, and the adults who work within them or come into regular contact with them as parents, visitors, etc. These children, young people and adults do not leave their 'outside' lives at the school door when they arrive, but bring with them a wealth of life experiences and learning.

Whether they are acknowledged or not, all the life issues and struggles of identity, relationships and community are present within the school setting. The Northern Irish experience of the conflict has added a particular dimension to this, one which schools are often reluctant to address, given the difficult and divisive issues which it can raise. Other aspects of life, such as the increasing diversity of ethnicity, culture and beliefs within Northern Ireland society, bring valuable opportunities for learning, including more challenging themes such as the experience of prejudice and discrimination.

This resource explores these issues as an essential part of learning how to live in society, specifically in the contested and transforming society of Northern Ireland. The issues that tend to be avoided or kept hidden ('taboo' subjects) may be the very ones that most need to be explored. The resource seeks to promote effective teaching and learning practice, and to provide guidance for exploring some of the more controversial issues which emerge in ways that are safe and appropriate, and which create positive learning experiences for children, young people and adults alike. It recognises that the most effective structure for this is a whole school approach where there is a shared ethos and commitment to being a respectful learning community, which values all its members as well as those outside.

11

Section 75 of the Equality Legislation (Northern Ireland Act, 1998), along with other human rights' frameworks, such as the United Nations' Convention on the Rights of the Child, provide a broader context of good practice, and should be further supported by a holistic, best practice approach to Child Protection.[1] The revised curriculum with its overall emphasis on values and skills builds on earlier work developed through Education for Mutual Understanding (EMU),[2] and offers clear opportunities for these themes to be explored, particularly in the areas of Mutual Understanding in the Local and Global Community (Primary)[3] and Local and Global Citizenship (Post-Primary).[4] Work in these areas can also be enhanced further by the opportunities offered by the Department of Education's Schools Community Relations Programme,[5] which encourages partnerships between schools as well as creative exploration of relevant themes within individual schools.

While recognising that this can seem like a huge additional area of work for schools, the resource focuses on principles of effective practice, which support positive ethos and high quality teaching and learning across every dimension of school life.

Who is this Resource For?

The resource was specifically developed to provide more training and support to student teachers, teachers, school senior managers and others involved in education, enabling them to feel more confident in exploring controversial issues with their colleagues or pupils, particularly those relating to identity, diversity and conflict, and to create an appropriate context for this work.

The ideas contained in the resource have been developed and tested over the past number of years in schools, teacher education institutions and Early / Continuing Professional Development contexts. The resource also draws on experience gained in youth and community work settings.

Among other possibilities, this resource would be useful for:

- *teachers working with their classes;*
- *a principal, Education & Library Board (ELB) advisor or external facilitator working with a team of teachers and / or support staff;*
- *two or more schools working together on a community relations programme;*
- *a tutor working with student teachers;*
- *ELB advisors working with Beginning Teachers;*
- *ELB advisors or external facilitators working with a group of school governors or parents;*
- *a principals' cluster group.*

1 Department of Education Circular (1999 / 10), Pastoral Care in Schools: Child Protection; Volunteer Development Agency (2000), Our Duty to Care: Principles of Good Practice for the Protection of Children and Young People, Belfast, VDA.

2 CCEA (1997), Mutual Understanding and Cultural Heritage: Cross-Curricular Guidance Materials, Belfast, CCEA.

3 CCEA (2002), Primary Values, Belfast, CCEA.

4 CCEA (2003), Local and Global Citizenship: A Resource for Post-Primary Schools, Belfast, CCEA.

5 DENI (2002), Review of the Schools Community Relations Programme, Bangor, DENI.

12

How can the Resource be Used?

We have tried to distil usefully, some of the key aspects of this kind of work. In some cases, this means that we only touch on areas which could fill several resource packs in themselves – the resource list at Appendix One will point you to places where you can find out more, if need be.

The resource takes a 'how to' approach, recognising that people will come to the resource with different experiences and learning. Some will find it useful to work through the resource from start to finish while others may choose to focus on particular sections.

Wherever the starting point, it is crucially important to give some attention to the overall ethos and approach before launching into the controversial issues dimension of the work.

Within each section you will find (if applicable):

Questions for Reflection
These can be used individually or as the basis for group discussion (in a tutorial setting, a staff team development setting or governors' / parents' session, etc.).

Theory into Practice
Based on real life examples, these scenarios and suggestions provide the opportunity to think about how the ideas in different sections could be used.

Sample Exercises and Resources
Examples of activities and resources to support groupwork and whole school development.

Session Outlines / Lesson Plans
Examples are given for Foundation Stage, Key Stage One, Key Stage Two, Secondary and Adult – but many of the activities within them can be adapted to suit various ages.

Checklists
These provide general points to think about in preparation for an individual session / lesson or a longer programme / module.

Definitions and Explanatory Notes

13

IDEAS TO GET STARTED

- *Start by skimming through quickly, taking in headings and key points.*

- *Choose sections that look particularly relevant to your situation.*

- *Begin at the start and work your way through to the end, using the Questions for Reflection to develop your thinking.*

- *If this kind of work is unfamiliar to you, work through it with an experienced colleague or mentor who can provide support.*

- *Try out some of the activities.*

- *Summarise the key points for someone else.*

- *Persuade someone to summarise it for you!*

- *Use it as a training resource with colleagues.*

- *Use it as an aspect of your Early or Continuing Professional Development, or of your Professional Qualification for Headship.*

- *Use it for bedtime reading!*

As you consider using the resource, bear in mind some of our starting premises:

- Learning is most effective when it is gained through active engagement in the process.

- Learning is about making connections, and understanding its application across a range of situations.

- Positive learning involves taking appropriate risks.

- Learning requires us to reflect, so that we can consolidate what we have learnt and put it into practice.

There are a lot of ideas and materials in this pack, but do not feel overwhelmed if many of these are new to you!

Take the ideas a step at a time, trying out what you feel confident about, and taking the appropriate risks when you feel ready for them.

14

687
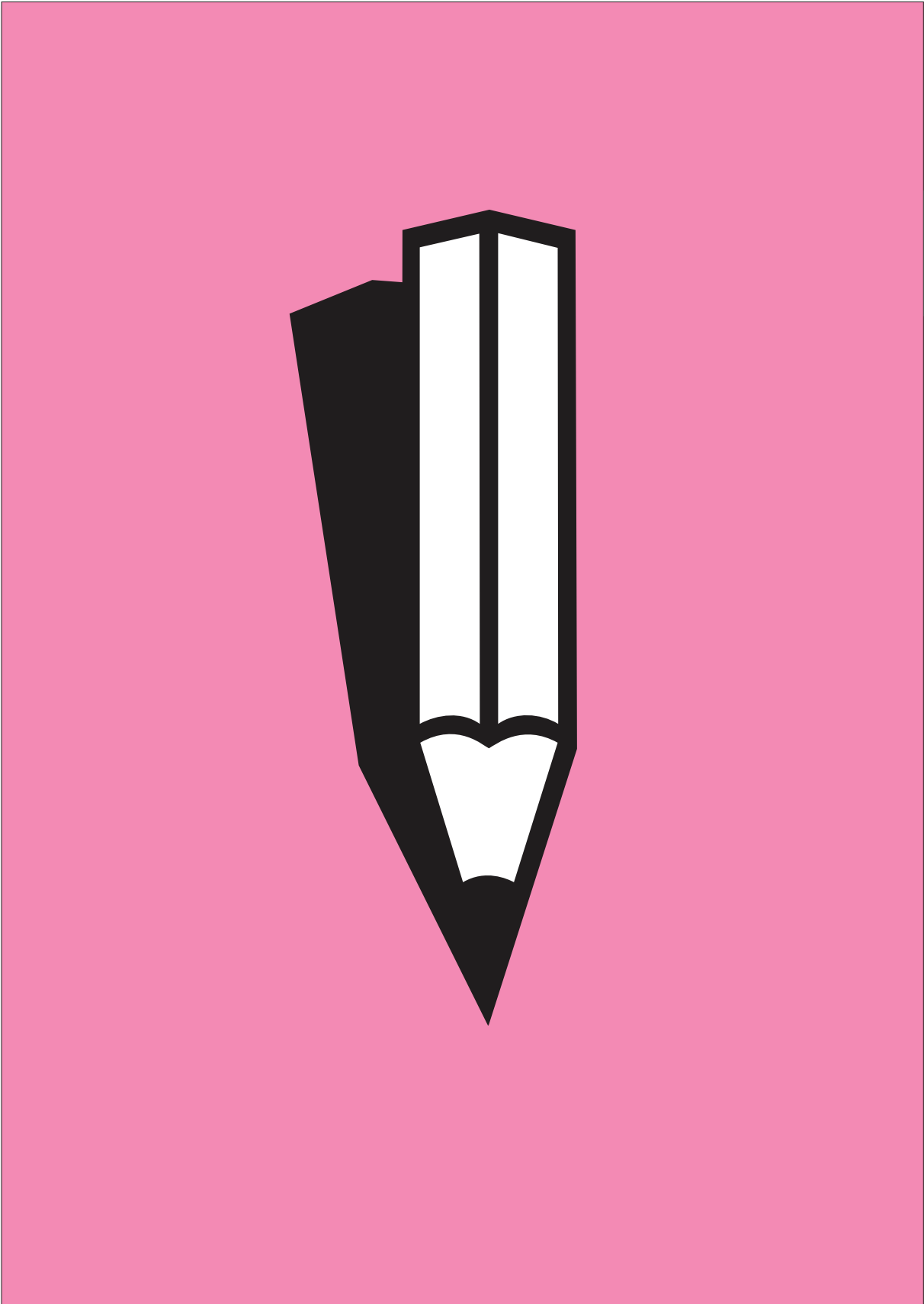
Understanding the Context

Teaching and Learning in
a Contested Society

People talking without speaking

People hearing without listening ...

'Fools,' said I, 'You do not know

Silence like a cancer grows.'

LYRICS FROM: SIMON, P. (1964), SOUNDS OF SILENCE.

understanding the context

1.0
Introduction

Northern Ireland is a curious place. Since 1969 over 3,600 people have died as a consequence of political violence. Since the mid 1990s there has been a peace process of sorts, but people are still being intimidated and killed, and shared political institutions have spent more time in suspension than in operation.

Despite the significant reduction in political violence in recent years, there is still a close relationship between people's religious or community background and:

- *the political party they vote for;*
- *the type of school they attend(ed);*
- *the area in which they live;*
- *their social and cultural preferences;*
- *the names they give to their children;*
- *the way they pronounce the letter 'h'!*

Northern Ireland remains a deeply divided society. In fact, there is some evidence that the level of segregation in our society is getting wider, almost as if it is easier and safer to live apart than to develop a shared future. Recent evidence reveals that children are beginning to show preference for symbols of 'their' community, as young as three and four years old.[1]

This research suggests that entering school for the first time represents a significant

milestone in the life of any child. It is likely to be the first time that many will begin to interact with larger numbers of other children and come under the influence of older peers. The report came to two broad conclusions:

- Children, from the age of three, should be encouraged to explore and experience a range of different cultural practices, events and symbols and to appreciate and respect difference and cultural diversity.

- From the age of five, children should be encouraged to understand the negative effects of sectarian and racist stereotypes and prejudices and to be able to identify them in their own attitudes where appropriate.

This clearly points out the role education can play in supporting children and young people to learn about themselves and others. It is complemented by the statutory requirements of the curriculum.

In all cultures people avoid talking about things that would make life difficult. Northern Ireland is not, of course, unique in this regard. There are secrets; taboos that are not talked about but are not forgotten. The reason for this behaviour is usually benign – people do not want to cause upset or hurt, to get into an argument, or to put themselves at risk. These adaptive behaviours are often so ingrained in our lives that we do not recognise them. We might, however, question whether this 'silence' is the best way to deal with the legacies of division and conflict in our society.

1 Connolly, P., Smith, A. and Kelly, B. (2002), Too Young to Notice, Belfast, Northern Ireland Community Relations Council.

17

Derick Wilson et al. cite the example of experienced teachers on a residential course who spoke of how they had not met 'in depth' with people from other traditions. The opportunity to hear about the lives of others brought up in a different culture / tradition was completely new for them, a silence was broken.[2] When we hear one another sharing openly a new reality comes between us. We begin to marvel at the separated lives we often lead here.

We live a so-called 'normal life' in the midst of a 'troubled society'. Social structures and inter-group relations have all been impacted by polite behaviours, divisions, fears, hostilities and segregation in contexts such as:

- *family and friendships;*
- *neighbourhoods and public spaces;*
- *school and youth experiences;*
- *church and culture;*
- *sports and recreation;*
- *the workplace;*
- *government, politics and law;*
- *ethnic groupings.*

The Concept of Northern Ireland as a Contested Society

A stable society is understood to be characterised by people sharing a common sense of identity. Within this a high degree of support and unanimity is accorded to state institutions and the institutions of law and order.

A contested society is one where there is no shared sense of identity and people have traditions / loyalties which can be exclusive and unlikely to accommodate difference.[3]

There are at least three main reasons why it is important for schools and the wider education system to try to break through this 'sound of silence':

1 It is difficult to see how we, as a society, can solve the legacies of division and conflict unless we find a way to talk about those legacies. It is not enough to ask people to forget about the past, but neither should we become prisoners of the past.

2 Evidence reveals that people find it liberating and enlightening to break through these silences. We often make assumptions about others, but when we are given opportunities to listen genuinely to other perspectives we can begin to develop better and more informed understanding.[4]

3 It has long been a matter of policy that schools and teachers have a responsibility to promote better community relations, tolerance and reconciliation among children and young people.

3 Adapted from a concept developed by Derick Wilson et al.

2 Morrow, D. and Wilson, D. (1996), Ways Out of Conflict: Resources for Community Relations Work, Coleraine, Understanding Conflict Trust.

4 Morrow, D. and Wilson, D. (1996), Ways Out of Conflict: Resources for Community Relations Work, Coleraine, Understanding Conflict Trust.

18

1.1
How has the Education Sector Responded to the Conflict?

Within our political world decisions have been designed to encourage inclusion and a peaceful society. A pattern of developing a new society can be discerned, not just in the Belfast Good Friday Agreement, and Section 75 of the Equality Legislation (Northern Ireland Act, 1998), but in a raft of decisions taken by the British and Irish Governments, Secretaries of State, devolved government departments and other public bodies.

Section 75 places the duty on all public bodies to pay due regard to the promotion of equality under nine different categories, and to promote good relations among people of different religious or racial backgrounds and political beliefs. These categories are as follows:

- *sexual orientation;*
- *age;*
- *gender;*
- *disability;*
- *dependents;*
- *marital status;*
- *racial group;*
- *political opinion;*
- *religious belief.*

Whilst this does not include schools, it does include the Department of Education and teacher training institutions, and it highlights the need to be advocates for good practice in relation to the legislation.

There have been many attempts to address these issues through education. In the 1970s some teachers organised contact projects between schools. In the 1980s the Department of Education created a special fund to support this work. During the same period, groups of parents started to establish new Integrated schools for Protestant and Catholic pupils and teachers. In the 1989 Education Reform Order the themes of Education for Mutual Understanding and Cultural Heritage were established as compulsory parts of the Northern Ireland Curriculum, and the government took on a commitment to support the development of Integrated Education.

Throughout these years exemplary initiatives have been carried out by schools and committed teachers. Research indicates, however, that the overall contribution of schools has been limited. The consensus is that education could and should do more to contribute to the improvement of community relations and the promotion of reconciliation and tolerance.

It was partly for these reasons that changes were made to the Northern Ireland Curriculum. These changes include the Local and Global Citizenship module for Post-Primary schools and revised curriculum for Foundation Stage, Key Stages One and Two, i.e. Personal Development Strands One and Two: Personal Understanding and Health, and Mutual Understanding in the Local and Global Community.

Local and Global Citizenship is based on the following key themes, which are addressed in local, national, European and global contexts:

- *diversity and inclusion;*
- *equality and social justice;*
- *democracy and active participation;*
- *human rights and social responsibility.*[5]

5 CCEA (2003), Local and Global Citizenship: A Resource for Post-Primary Schools, Belfast, CCEA.

19

These themes are not seen as separate but as closely interrelated aspects of citizenship. The aim is to support pupils in investigating the themes and in developing their capacity to be active and participatory citizens within the Northern Ireland context.

Some teachers will be given specialist training in Local and Global Citizenship, but all those involved in education need to be aware of the positive role they have to play. Most significantly, they can and should help children and young people feel comfortable with difference, whether it is defined in terms of religious or political outlook, ethnic or racial identity, gender, disability, etc.

The revised primary curriculum aims to empower children to develop their potential. It aims to support children to develop as:

- *individuals;*
- *contributors to society;*
- *contributors to the economy and environment.*

The Mutual Understanding in the Local and Global Community strand encourages the exploration of diversity and allows for development of the concept of citizenship.

These changes to the curriculum create further opportunities for schools and the wider education sector to contextualise the support they can offer to children and young people. They also support the school to address the issues of managing diversity in an ever-changing society with increasing levels of racism and sectarianism, and to reflect the ethos of the school in all its practice.

20

1.2
How can the Education Sector Address Issues of Diversity?

Education can have a role in preparing children and young people to be at ease with diversity, including:

- with people from different ethnic traditions to their own;

- with people from different religious and political outlooks;

- around people of a different gender orientation;

- around people with different levels of physical and mental ability.

These aims can only be achieved if the reality of the contested society is acknowledged by all within the school community.

This can be done by reflecting upon our understanding of our experiences of life in Northern Ireland, which have shaped us as individuals. On a practical level we need to create spaces where children, young people and adults can meet in a new way, so that change is a positive experience and is not forced or contrived. People need to understand each other in an atmosphere of trust, so that they can speak freely without the anxious politeness which so easily generates sectarianism or racism. A useful place to start this process could be with:

- *your whole staff team;*
- *your department or Key Stage group;*
- *your class;*
- *parents / carers;*
- *governors.*

If the Questions for Reflection are used with different groups, they will need to be adapted to suit each particular one.

Questions for Reflection

What do you feel has been the impact of the conflict on:

- *the education sector as a whole;*
- *society;*
- *the school;*
- *children and young people;*
- *you, personally (and professionally)?*

What things do people tend to be private about or have as taboos in Northern Ireland?

Should we be private about certain things?

Are there certain things that are private in the classroom / school?

How can the education sector meet the challenge of contributing to the creation of a peaceful society based on equity?

Does the school see itself as having a part to play in this?

21

694
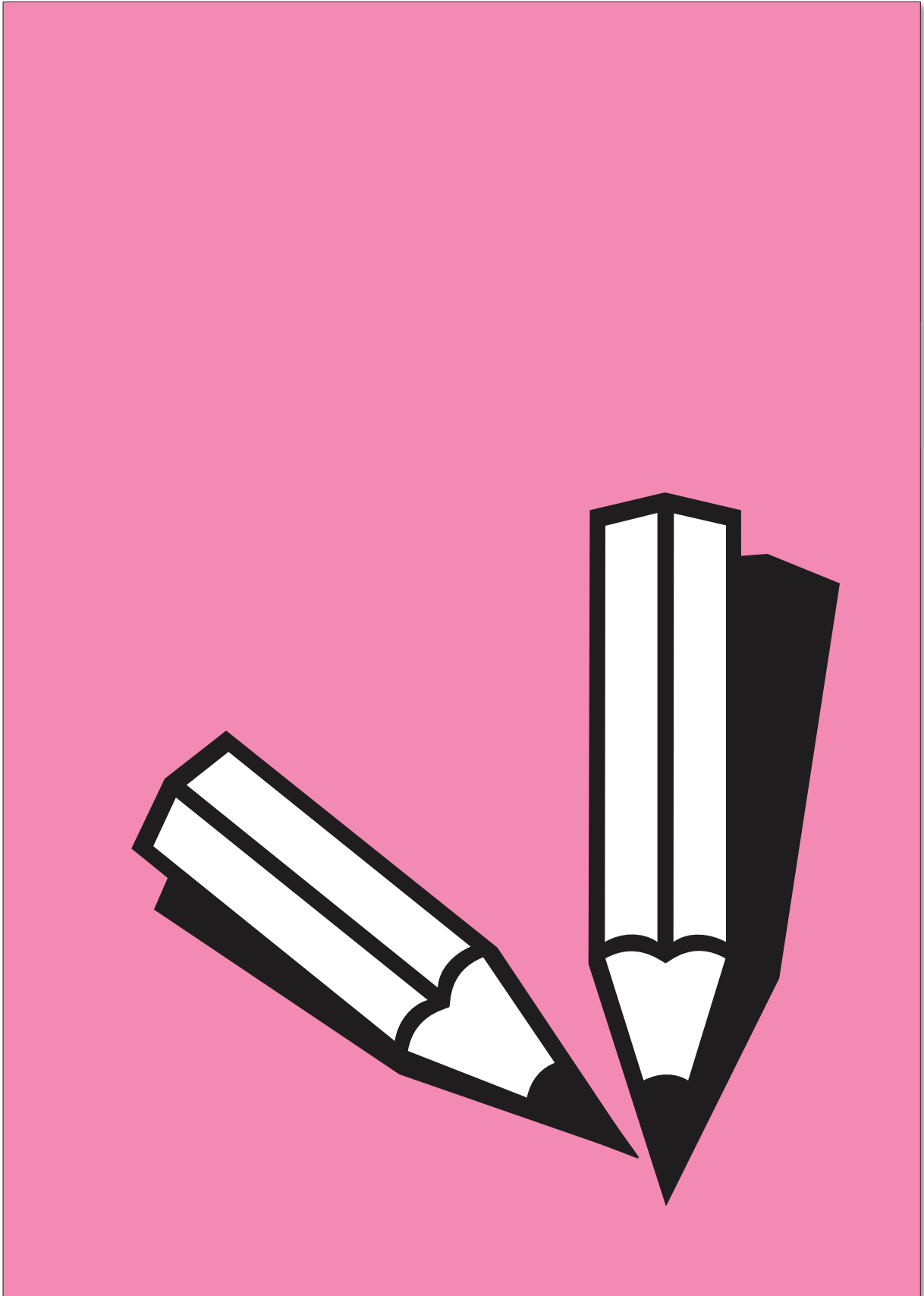
Creating an Inclusive Learning Community

A Whole School Approach

'Genuine learning occurs in
the context of our lives, and
the long-term impact of any
new learning depends on
its relationships to the world
around us.'

SENGE, P. ET AL. (2000), *SCHOOLS THAT LEARN*,
LONDON, NICHOLAS BREALEY PUBLISHING.

creating an inclusive learning community

2.0
What is an Ethos?

Every school has its own ethos in the sense of a dominant pervading spirit or character that finds expression in the behavioural habits of those who are part of it. An ethos is, ideally, owned by the whole school community.

It has both overt and hidden dimensions and is expressed and developed best through 'a shared dialogue on the core values of the school community and the daily practice, which tries to reflect these values'.[1] An ethos is more perceptible to visitors or new staff / pupils as we often adapt to the circumstances we are in and become blind to old habits.

☑

A school ethos should be:

- *based on agreed core values;*
- *reflected in the structures / relationships in the school;*
- *reflected in the curriculum and other working practices of the school;*
- *reflected in school policies;*
- *reflected in the relationship with the wider community;*
- *reflected in the practices of all within the school community.*

It is important to ask whether the school's practice mirrors its mission statement or whether there is a dichotomy between theory and practice?

If values are compartmentalised so that they only exist in certain subjects then the school has not developed a community built on values of fairness, diversity and interdependence (recognition that we are in relationships with a whole spectrum of individuals and communities). The message pupils may receive is that these values are only 'real' in Personal Development / Local and Global Citizenship and that they do not have a role in all aspects of school life.

What is Diversity?

All environments have diversity within them, but for a school the challenge is how to respond to the visible and invisible layers of diversity surrounding it.

Diversity is not simply a 'positive good, it is a necessary element of education.' Senge et al. suggest that the diversity of ideas which comes from the diversity of people is one of the best ways to create the necessary condition of learning. Fostering this diversity of ideas and engaging 'with the individuals who brought with them their diverse personal and cultural histories can contribute to a vibrant intellectual education'.[2]

1 Furlong, C. and Monahan, L. (2000), School Culture and Ethos: Cracking the Code, Dublin, Marino Institute of Education.

2 Senge, P. et al. (2000), Schools That Learn, London, Nicholas Brealey Publishing.

25

CREATING AN INCLUSIVE LEARNING COMMUNITY

Questions for Reflection

Does the school see 'diversity' as a guiding principle, or has it become a 'catchword'; is it advocated to achieve equity?

What plans are in place for the school to be active in contributing to an inclusive and diverse society?

To explore this question it will be important to reflect upon what contributes to a diverse environment: what do we understand diversity and inclusivity to mean?

If an environment exists:

- *which is inclusive;*
- *which is equitable;*
- *where individuals are valued and respected;*
- *where trust is built;*
- *where open and diverse discussion occurs;*

then there will be possibilities for positive relationships and the development of new skills and relevant life learning.

Example of Diversity in the Classroom

DIVERSITY

POLITICAL AFFILIATION	SOCIO-ECONOMIC BACKGROUND
APPEARANCE	NATIONALITY
AGE	LANGUAGE
RELIGION	URBAN / RURAL
FAMILY BACKGROUND	LIFE EXPERIENCE
SEXUALITY	ETHNICITY
GENDER	ACADEMIC ABILITY
ABILITY	DISABILITY

26
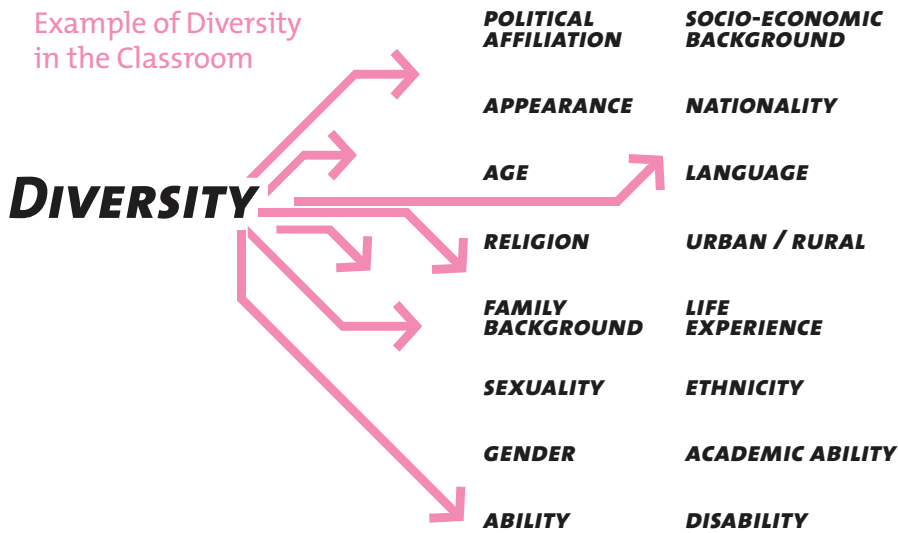
What is a Culture of Inclusion?

A culture of inclusion describes a place which appreciates the diversities within it. It requires commitment from a number of areas in the school and it will take significant time, depending on the current climate.

Inclusion involves increasing the learning and participation of pupils, staff and other adults in the school community, and minimising barriers which may stand in their way; it is a set of never-ending processes.

Inclusion in education:

- Inclusion in education is one aspect of inclusion in society.

- Inclusion is concerned with fostering mutually sustaining relationships in schools, between schools and between schools and communities.

- Diversity is not viewed as a problem to be overcome, but as a rich resource to support the learning for all.

- Inclusion is concerned with improving schools for the staff as well as for the pupils.

- Inclusion involves restructuring the culture, policies, practice in schools so that they respond to the diversity of pupils / staff.[3]

Questions for Reflection

How does the school respond to the needs of an increasingly diverse and pluralist society?

What kinds of diversity are in the school?

How do you know when you are in a diverse environment?

When do you feel diversity is a good thing and can add value to learning and when does it become negative?

Does recognising diversity lead to greater fairness?

Can several identities exist at the same time within the school community?

How do pupils and staff (including support staff) relate? Do people treat each other with respect and dignity? Are opportunities for demonstrating a caring and supportive attitude provided?

Has the staff discussed the school's hidden curriculum?

What strikes visitors as they enter the school:
- *Religious symbols and emblems?*
- *Pictures of successful work / school teams?*
- *Pictures of class groups?*
- *Pupils' artwork?*
- *Are the symbols displayed in the school inclusive or exclusive?*

Has the school a competitive ethos or co-operative / collaborative ethos? How is this manifested?

Are opportunities for exercising responsibility provided for the pupils and for the staff?

3 Adapted from Booth, T., Ainscow, M., Black-Hawkins, K., Vaughan, M. and Shaw, L. (2000), Index for Inclusion: Developing Learning and Participation in Schools, Bristol, CSIE.

27

2.1
A Whole School Approach

For some time there has been widespread agreement among educationalists that collaborative school development and planning is a powerful means of promoting school effectiveness. Increasingly, schools are engaging in ongoing whole school planning in order to create optimum learning environments and to embed fully key initiatives and effective practice, for example:

- *any new procedures;*
- *curricular provision;*
- *teaching and learning values;*
- *teaching and learning strategies;*
- *self-evaluation;*
- *good relations.*

A whole school approach enhances the school's ethos and work and is effective in as far as it includes all who make up the school community.

The whole school approach is essentially a process in which policy and plans evolve from the ever-changing and developing needs of the school community. This approach takes into account the school's uniqueness in terms of its:

- *teaching and support staff;*
- *pupils;*
- *governors;*
- *parents / carers;*
- *support structures;*
- *local context / community;*
- *availability of resources, etc.*

This approach supports the whole school to manage diversity effectively and build on the principle of inclusivity.

Who is Involved in a Whole School Approach?

As stated earlier, a successful whole school approach requires the involvement of all the stakeholders. The extent to which individuals will be involved will depend on their role within the school.

WHOLE SCHOOL

PUPILS

PRINCIPAL

GOVERNORS

SUPPORT STAFF

CLASSROOM ASSISTANTS

SENIOR MANAGEMENT

LOCAL COMMUNITY

DEPARTMENT, YEAR, KEY STAGE AND SUBJECT CO-ORDINATORS

PARENTS

TEACHERS

28

What is a Whole School Approach?

A whole school approach is a statement of the educational philosophy of the school, its aims and how it proposes to achieve them. In practical terms, this can be described as a school plan; a written resource which facilitates a co-ordinated development within the entire school community.

Such a document can only be arrived at through a process of interactive and collaborative dialogue within the broader school community, which is continually reflected and acted upon as practice and learning emerges.

The whole school approach should contain some basic principles at its core:

• a commitment to an ethos / culture based on fairness, diversity and interdependence;

• opportunities for involvement of the entire school community in the development and planning processes;

• creating a climate to ensure the ownership and development are encouraged and sustained;

• monitoring and evaluation systems to measure the effectiveness of, and the learning within, the approach.

Essential to the school plan is that it should describe how the school can prepare children and young people for a multicultural, diverse and inclusive society and support the practice of democratic life.

What is Involved in a Whole School Approach?

Leadership
This refers to the management structures (what are they; who has access to them?) and the need for growth in its own understanding and capacity to think in terms of relationships

WHOLE SCHOOL MODEL

LEADERSHIP

INTERNAL RELATIONSHIPS

POLICIES & STRATEGIES

WORKING PRACTICES

TEACHING AND LEARNING POLICIES

RELATIONSHIPS WITH THE WIDER COMMUNITY

RELATIONSHIPS WITH THE EDUCATION SECTOR

29
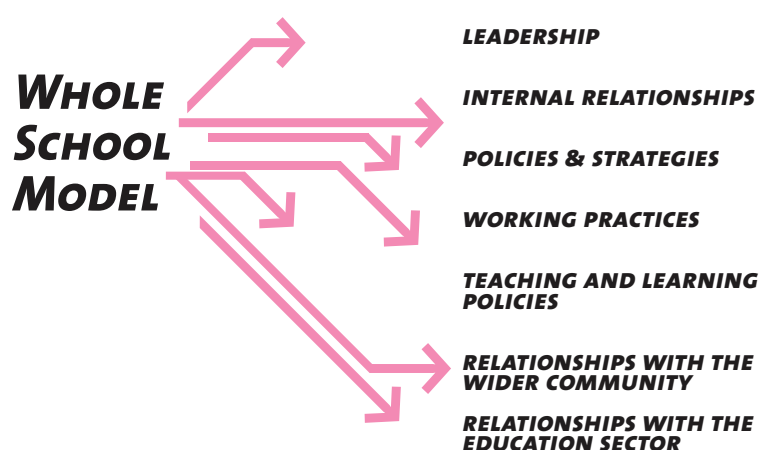
and negotiating differences: for example, to what extent does management demonstrate a vision of inclusiveness?

Internal relationships
These are the foundation of a good school community. Structures need to be put into place to allow relationships to develop and promote a culture of inclusion. To develop a whole school approach to self-esteem, culture and ethos, staff need to reflect on their own practice in the school. Staff need ongoing professional development.

Policies and strategies
These need to be designed to support a diverse and inclusive environment, for example, a policy / strategy on good relations which could include managing diversity, promotion of understanding, respect and tolerance, symbols / emblems, inter-school projects, positive behaviour, pastoral care, etc. Reflection is needed on what policies / strategies currently exist in the school. How are these tested / monitored and do all the stakeholders know the reasons for these policies and strategies?

Working practices
These show how effective the school is at practising fairness. This will involve reflecting on, for example, the:

- *curriculum;*
- *teacher - pupil dialogue;*
- *meeting pupils' needs;*
- *pastoral care;*
- *personal and social development;*
- *environment – classroom, school, foyer, etc. – is it welcoming?;*
- *pupil morale;*
- *positive discipline;*
- *extra-curricular activities;*
- *sports day;*
- *assemblies;*
- *self-evaluation system.*

Teaching and learning policies
These reflect the school's understanding of the concept of learning; the values which underpin the approaches to teaching; the styles and methodologies used in teaching adopted by the school; the aspiration of developing autonomous learners; the need to take into account the range of intelligences; learning styles; the impact of teaching a diverse group of individuals; and the practice of self-evaluation.

Relationships with the wider community
These show the school identifying its place in the wider community, acknowledging the relationship it has to it and creating strategies to enhance relationships with the school's potential partners, for example, the business and voluntary sectors.

Relationships with the education sector
The school does not exist in isolation from the educational changes that are happening around it and the drive to forge partnerships with other educational bodies. The school needs to be aware of whom they make links with and for what reasons.

2.2
Building an Inclusive Learning Community

Strategies to build a whole school approach must facilitate reflection on existing practice and design practical steps which build on the culture and ethos of the school. The change process must be seen to be integrated into the school development plan and not separate or additional. A framework may include the following. (This is not, however, a blueprint and may need to be adapted to suit the uniqueness of each school.)

OVERVIEW OF THE PROCESS
This process supports the school in learning about itself. It actively creates opportunities for growth and learning, which will enable the school to contribute to a society, which is struggling to build inclusivity.

This process, detailed below, is designed to support the school and all the stakeholders within the school. It can provide you with a focus and a starting point. There may, however, be different starting points that suit your situation better. The process must be owned by the leadership of the school.

EXTERNAL FACILITATOR
This could be an ELB advisor, a Regional Training Unit officer, a representative of the voluntary sector, a mentor, another principal, etc. The role of an external person is to support the school to engage in the discussions that need to happen for a true reflection. The external person also brings new networks, ideas and experiences that challenge the insularity of the school and may enrich the learning.

Some useful points in selecting an external facilitator:

- The school needs to be clear about what they need from an external person so they have clear parameters in which to work and be accountable.

- The person needs to have a good under-standing of change management and of the education sector.

- The person needs to be effective in group management and facilitation skills.

- The person needs to be an individual with whom the school feels comfortable and trusts.

ESTABLISHING A DEVELOPMENT GROUP
This is a group which will act as a driver for the process of change and the implementation of a whole school plan / approach.

The group is made up of people from diverse levels of the school and must include the voice of the pupils in some form, enabling them to make a meaningful contribution to the process. It could, for example, include a member of the senior management team, two teaching staff, two support staff, a member from the administrative team, two parents and a Board of Governors' representative.

It will take some time for this group to gel and to establish a set of agreements for how the group will work together, so this must be taken into consideration in thinking about a time-frame.

The role of the group is to ensure the process of change is implemented and remains a priority for the school. It also creates a working space which role models 'good relations' and supports a whole school philosophy.

31

Some useful points to take into consideration when establishing the development group: 4

• Establish criteria for membership of the group. It is important to invite those who are initially sceptical or opposed to this process as well as those who are committed.

• Membership of the group should have an upper limit, depending partly on the size of the school.

• The external person should facilitate the group until the group members gain an understanding of the process.

• Communication internally and externally should be discussed and agreed; as should how the group will communicate their function, their learning and deliberations.

• Meetings should be clearly structured.

Questions for Reflection in the Development Group

How should this journey / process begin?

Who needs to be involved and when?

How are those from the wider school community to be engaged?

Can the process connect with the school development plan / vision?

How will we manage the time commitment?

How will we monitor the progress and maintain the changes?

Can we identify an external evaluator?

ESTABLISHING A BASELINE

It is important to know where the school's starting points are and to value what is already being achieved. A useful way to do this is to carry out a school audit which provides you with a baseline of information. This will also assist you in your monitoring and evaluation as you will be able to reflect on where you have come from and where you want to go to. Further details on this are provided in the guidance material which follows.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

For full exploration of the purpose of evaluation, see Developing a Model for Self-evaluation (Section Six).

Points for consideration:

• The audit will provide baseline information, which can form your performance indicators.

• Keep all records of meetings / consultation.

• Evaluate all meetings / development sessions, using, for example, minutes, feedback sheets from participants, etc.

• Review practice based on the evaluations and include any updated practice, for example, policies, lesson plans.

• Keep copies or a record of all resources used.

• Keep a record of all external facilitators, consultants, etc. who have assisted.

• Check that you are receiving input and feedback from all members of the school community, including children and young people.

• Complete the audit again after, for example, six months or a year to measure progression.

4 Adapted from Eyben, K., Morrow, D. and Wilson, D. (2003), A Framework for Organisational Learning and Change, Coleraine, Future Ways.

32

2.3

Creating an Inclusive Learning Community: Guidance Material

Establishing a Shared Vision, Values and Mission Statement

Elements of the Visioning Process

- Take into consideration all stakeholders.

- Develop an agreed set of values, a vision and a mission statement.

- Implementation includes the strategy, plans, procedures and key actions that will form an action plan.

- If you enable the individual to grasp / contribute to the vision, change will be less insurmountable / scary / disconcerting.

Vision
Description of preferred future, which the school wishes to create. A vision statement should include your basic strategy on how you want to achieve your mission. It should include your spoken and unspoken hopes and dreams. Your vision should inspire and touch you.

Values
Values are the principles, the standards, the actions that people in a school represent, which they consider inherently worthwhile and of the utmost importance. Values are the meaning we attach to things. People act from their values, and different people value different things. Shared values provide everyone with a common direction and guidelines. These values, in turn, should underpin policies, practices and standards for the group.

Mission Statement
This answers questions such as:

- *Why do we exist?*
- *What do we do and for whom?*
- *How are we unique?*
- *What is most important about our work?*

> Those who anticipate the future are empowered to create it.
>
> John F. Kennedy

> Some see things as they are and ask 'why?', I dream of things that never were and ask, 'why not?' G. B. Shaw

33

703

SAMPLE VISIONING EXERCISES 5

Below are guidelines and then some examples to stimulate individuals thoughts regarding their vision.

- *Focus on what really matters to your school.*
- *Focus on imagining what is happening.*
- *Focus on what you want to create.*
- *Avoid how to make it happen.*
- *Avoid today's problems.*
- *Avoid what is not working.*

1 You are in a lift with an education inspector, you have one minute to convince her / him of the benefits of the vision you have for your school.

2 Imagine achieving a goal that you deeply desire. There is no proper way of answering this and no measurable way to win or lose. Playfulness, inventiveness and spiritedness are all helpful. Imagine accepting into your life the full manifestation of this goal.

What does it look like?
What does it feel like?
What words would you use to describe it?

Now pause and consider your answer to the first question. Did you articulate a vision that is close to what you actually want?

SAMPLE VALUES EXPLORATION EXERCISES

1 Using the series of quotations listed below, which can be spread around the room, ask individuals to select one or two quotations which mean something to them and say something about the values in which they believe. Reflect on these quotations and ask individuals to identify the practice relating to those chosen. Ask how this practice is evidenced in the school, classroom, canteen, playground, parent meetings, Board of Governors' meetings, etc.

Quotations to Consider:

It is easy enough to be friendly to one's friends. But to befriend the one who regards himself as your enemy is the quintessence of true religion. The other is mere business.
Mohandas K. Gandhi, activist (1869-1948)

If we could read the secret history of our enemies, we should find in each man's life sorrow and suffering enough to disarm all hostility.
Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, poet (1807-1882)

Washing one's hands of the conflict between the powerful and the powerless means to side with the powerful, not to be neutral.
Paulo Freire, educator (1921-1997)

There would be no society if living together depended upon understanding each other.
Eric Hoffer, philosopher and author (1902-1983)

A society grows great when old men plant trees whose shade they know they shall never sit in.
Greek proverb

To have doubted one's own first principles is the mark of a civilized man.
Oliver Wendell Holmes, Sr., poet, novelist, essayist and physician (1809-1894)

Your assumptions are your windows on the world. Scrub them off every once in a while, or the light won't come in.
Alan Alda, actor and director (1936-)

The secret of life is honesty and fair dealing. If you can fake that, you've got it made.
Groucho Marx, actor and comedian (1890-1977)

The truth is rarely pure, and never simple.
Oscar Wilde, writer (1854-1900)

No two persons ever read the same book.
Edmund Wilson, critic (1895-1972)

The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others.
Mohandas K. Gandhi, activist (1869-1948)

We are all in the gutter, but some of us are looking at the stars.
Oscar Wilde, writer (1854-1900)

If only there were evil people somewhere insidiously committing evil deeds and it were necessary only to separate them from the rest of us and destroy them. But the line dividing good and evil cuts through the heart of every human being. And who is willing to destroy a piece of his own heart?
Alexander Solzhenitsyn, novelist, Nobel laureate (1918-)

Live as if the change you want to see has already come.
Mohandas K. Gandhi, activist (1869-1948)

Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful committed people can change the world. Indeed it is the only thing that ever has.
Margaret Mead, anthropologist (1901-1978)

No child on earth was ever meant to be ordinary, and you can see it in them, and they know it, too, but then the times get to them, and they wear out their brains learning what folks expect, and spend their strength trying to rise over those same folks.
Annie Dillard, writer and poet (1945-)

Die when I may, I want it said of me by those who knew me best, that I always plucked a thistle and planted a flower where I thought a flower would grow.
Abraham Lincoln, U.S. President (1809–1865)

I tell you, the more I think the more I feel that there is nothing more artistic than to love people.
Vincent Van Gogh, artist (1853–1890)

To try to improve society is not worldliness, but love. To wash your hands of society is not love but worldliness.
Sir Frederick Catherwood, former vice-president of the European Parliament (1925-)

2 You could get individuals to reflect on some of the following questions in small groups and feedback their responses:

- *What do we stand for?*
- *What behaviours would mirror these values?*
- *How do we treat each other, pupils, parents, Board of Governors, community etc.?*
- *What core values are most important to us?*
- *How do we want to treat each other?*

These answers should spark a discussion which supports the identification of the most important values.

35

3 Write the values in the school prospectus onto A4 paper and ask individuals in small groups to arrange the statements in a pyramid with the most important at the top and the least at the bottom. Ask individuals to reflect on the pyramid, how they made their decisions and what values held some tension for the group. Encourage the group to explore how these values relate to their practice within the school and all those involved in the school.

SAMPLE EXERCISES FOR THINKING ABOUT A MISSION STATEMENT

Groups have experimented with developing an image of the future – their vision – without referring to their mission. The image tends to become impractical when it is not grounded in the specific mission of the school. The mission statement should say who you are and why you are passionate about it. The mission is directly linked to a broad analysis of the school and its environment. Make it short – try not to have more than three sentences.

A mission statement might include statement starters such as some of the following:

- *We believe that ...*
- *At this school we are committed to ...*
- *Our school community is ...*
- *Our aim is to ...*

Carrying Out a School Audit

An audit is a tool which can gauge levels of need under a specific theme. It is important for the school to test the underpinning values, to map out the current reality in terms of how individuals feel in relation to fairness, diversity and interdependence.

This mapping out of the realities must take into account all aspects of school life, for example:

- *curriculum;*
- *leadership;*
- *relationships internally and externally;*
- *policies and strategies.*

Such a tool must gather the feedback from all sections of the school community. The audit could be done through a number of methods such as one of, or a combination of, the following:

- *written questionnaires;*
- *focus groups;*
- *circle time;*
- *drama or art-based activities.*

See Appendix Two for a Sample School Audit

Priorities for Development

In order to draw up priorities, the development group examines and analyses the contributions from everyone who has been consulted. This is a large amount of work and, therefore, needs to be shared, especially if it is a large school. The external facilitator is a useful resource for this process.

It may be desirable to keep the information gained from the different stakeholders of the school separate initially so that the differences can be genuinely explored.

As the issues are identified, further information may be required to provide a clearer picture. The finalising of priorities must consider the needs of each of the stakeholders within the school so that the voices of the least powerful are not lost. It is not simply a matter of including those issues which are most commonly stated.

It is inevitable that there will be a short-term and long-term list of priorities. The development group must explore the implications of each priority so that a realistic action plan can be agreed. This is particularly important in relation to reviewing the progress of the implementation.

Implementing Change

Key areas for practical change need to be identified and a development plan drawn up to implement these changes. This should outline distinct tasks, identify those responsible for carrying them out and indicate clear deadlines.

Action Plan

What are the areas for reflection?

What are the strengths?

What do we need to do to effect improvement?

What evidence will we seek to monitor the changes?

What resources will we need?

Who will be involved?

How long will it take?

37

STARTING POINTS

Making the Task of Change more Manageable
After you carry out the audit you might want to focus on one aspect of school life rather than dealing with all the potential learning from the audit at once. Break it down into manageable chunks which can be incorporated into the school development plan and focused on over a set period of time, for example, a year.

The Process can Start in Many Places

- It might start by looking at the individual classroom climate / ethos where a reasonable question might be: *How can the classroom environment foster self-esteem, positive interpersonal relationships, independence and interdependence?*

- Or it might start with the teaching and learning process where the question might be: *What strategies has the teacher built into the learning and teaching process to ensure opportunities for the development of the whole person?*

- Or equity of opportunity might be the starting point: *What strategies are in place to ensure true equality of opportunity for all, by which individual aspirations may be recognised, encouraged and achieved?*

- Or the promotion of positive behaviour:

How does the school become a place where care and trust are emphasised above the constrictions and threats, where each person is asked to live up to the ideals of kindness, fairness and responsibility?

- Or the environment of the school: *How can members of the school contribute to and enhance the school environment for the mutual benefit of all?*

- Or lines of communication: *How can attention to the nature of communications within the whole school community reflect key ideas such as respect and mutual trust and promote positive relationships?*

- Or leadership: *By what processes does a leader, whether of the school, subject department, classroom or group within the class, ensure a climate of co-operation based on trust and high regard?*

38

PROCESS SUMMARY:

CLARIFY VISION

CARRY OUT AUDIT

CONSIDER GAP
between vision
and audit evidence

PRIORITISE
for change

TAKE ACTION

REVIEW ACTION

DECIDE NEXT STEP

- *Decide to make a start.*
- *The whole school approach is an ongoing, self-evaluative, learning process.*
- *Clarify understandings of key terms, for example, 'school' and 'curriculum'.*
- *Keep pupil development at the heart of all planning.*
- *Evaluate progress against set targets.*
- *Celebrate strengths.*
- *Think, discuss, consult, collaborate.*
- *Give and receive honest feedback.*
- *Ensure the revised action steps are supported, monitored and reviewed.*
- *Invite objective viewpoints.*
- *Continue evaluating and re-evaluating.*

39

711

Building a Positive Learning Environment

Using Groupwork
and Facilitation

building a positive learning environment
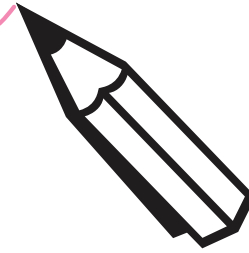
3.0
Introduction

This section looks at the use of groupwork and facilitation as a way of working, which supports the development of a positive learning environment. The purpose of the section is to:

• provide some definitions and explanations of key terms;

• suggest some general guidelines for using groupwork and facilitation with children, young people and adults;

• look at the benefits and possibilities of another facilitator (co-working);

• encourage personal reflection and preparation on the part of facilitators (this could be a teacher, a senior manager, an ELB advisor, etc.);

• explore how groups work, thinking about the individuals who make them up and the interactions between them;

• consider how the facilitator can best support group members and enable them to learn;

• suggest some guidelines for responding to behaviour which is 'challenging'.

3.1
Groupwork

People come together in groups for all kinds of reasons, and there are many examples of work in groups within a classroom / school setting. These might include a:

• *teachers' Key Stage meeting;*
• *department staff meeting;*
• *group of pupils working on a project together;*
• *teacher working with her / his class;*
• *parents' group meeting;*
• *playground supervisors' training session;*
• *senior management team discussion;*
• *Board of Governors' meeting.*

Any of these gatherings might involve a groupwork dimension which in this context has a specific definition as outlined below. Circle Time is a highly structured example of this kind of groupwork which is already widely used in schools.

43

Groupwork

Groupwork occurs when a number of people gather together to participate in a purposeful process for which there is likely to be one or more facilitators.

The Process:
everything which takes place within the group: how things happen, the relationships and interactions involved, etc.

The Facilitator(s):
may come from within the group, or be an external person drawn in because of her / his particular experience or skills. The groupwork process will ideally have a clear beginning, middle and end to achieve its purpose. At its most effective, the process is likely to involve:

- *clarity of purpose / aim and expectations;*
- *self-reflection;*
- *listening to different perspectives;*
- *the expression of ideas and feelings;*
- *learning from each other;*
- *exploration of personal and group values and beliefs.*

While the group may set out to complete a **task** together (for example, drafting a mission / vision statement for the school, giving a group presentation to the class, developing a series of positive behaviour strategies), a greater emphasis is placed on the groupwork **process** rather than simply on completing the task itself.

This kind of groupwork is an invaluable methodology for exploring themes which draw on people's life experiences, attitudes and beliefs, because it:

- is based on an inclusive and democratic ethos;
- is relational and interactive;
- encourages co-learning, i.e. the facilitator can learn from group members and vice versa;
- is not dependent on 'right' answers or factual expertise, it encourages investigative approaches.

The benefit of all of these dimensions has been highlighted within Local and Global Citizenship guidance materials.[1]

Questions for Reflection

What groups do I belong to as a member or as a facilitator or potential facilitator?

What tasks are these groups focused around?

What aspects of the group process am I aware of?
- *how people relate to each other?*
- *how individuals participate?*
- *the facilitator's style of working?*
- *body language?*
- *other aspects?*

Does the process involve the aspects outlined in the previous box? What demonstrates this? How can we measure this?

How do I participate in the group as a learner?

What am I learning through my involvement in the group(s)?

[1] CCEA (2003), Local and Global Citizenship: A Resource for Post-Primary Schools, Belfast, CCEA.

44

3.2
The Facilitation Process

The Role of the Facilitator

A facilitator is essentially an enabler. Through her / his interaction with group members and attention to the group process, s/he enables group members to participate effectively and to achieve the agreed purpose of their time together.

While group members are being encouraged to take responsibility for their own learning, and to participate in planning and evaluating programmes, it is ultimately the facilitator's responsibility, in conjunction with the group, to:

• keep the group focused on the overall purpose of the session;

• ensure that an inclusive setting and atmosphere are maintained in which people feel safe enough to participate.

This needs to be built on the facilitator's personal and programmatic preparation for work with the group. The facilitator's role will include the following specific elements:

• Building trust within the group. This is likely to mean spending time working together on building relationships before focusing directly on the programme / session's theme.

• Developing ground rules with the group, and appropriately calling group members back to these when necessary. See Section Five (Developing a Contract / Learning Agreement).

• Ensuring clarity about the group's purpose and objectives for their time together, whether this is for a particular session or a series of sessions / module.

• Avoiding jargon and abbreviations which may confuse, exclude or alienate some or all group members. Do not assume that group members, even if they are colleagues, have had access to the same information, documentation, etc. which you have had. If you need to use particular jargon, etc., respectfully check out that group members understand the meaning and context.

• Establishing an atmosphere of respectful listening and ensuring that everyone gets the opportunity to speak without interruption if they want to.

• Maintaining and demonstrating fairness, making sure that no one person or group dominates the discussion or activities but that everyone has the opportunity to be heard and to participate.

• Giving attention to the process. This includes:

• *being aware of body language and 'mood' within the group;*

• *recognising reactions and allowing them to be expressed appropriately;*

• *assisting effective communication between group members, if necessary;*

• *being sensitive to things which may be difficult for people to say or to hear;*

• *being aware when someone is experiencing strong feelings but is unable to express them vocally within the group;*

• *being sensitive to when a group needs a short break for whatever reason;*

• *attending to conflict within the group.*

45

715

• Modelling an enthusiastic and interested approach right from the opening remarks, and keeping an eye on the energy levels within the group. It is useful to have some calming and re-energising strategies ready, in case they are required.

• Choosing appropriate activities for different age groups, abilities (physical, language and literacy, etc.), cultural contexts, genders, etc.

• Working at an appropriate pace for the group, building on their previous experiences and learning. Allowing time to develop the issues being explored – do not be afraid of silence, and do not cut people off too quickly, as they may feel dismissed and lose interest.

• Expressing milestones, summing up the process to date, and helping the group to reflect on what they have achieved so far and what remains to be done.

• Highlighting and seeking alternatives to expressed opinions so a range of perspectives can be heard, points of agreement reached where appropriate, and ways forward discovered.

• Enabling the group to take new directions or move on if they get stuck in a particular

discussion. This might be through asking some open questions or through introducing a new activity that will help people to approach the theme from a different angle.

• Bringing the group back to the core purpose / theme if the discussion becomes inappropriately sidetracked (but avoid steering towards a predetermined outcome which you have decided the group needs to reach).

• Being flexible with the programme so that changes can be made in line with group needs.

• Being aware of the time available, structuring it appropriately and making sure group members know how much time they have for particular activities or discussions.

• Limiting your own vocal contributions, bearing in mind that you are facilitating the learning of group members and are, therefore, a different kind of participant. This also means being comfortable with silences, and not filling them unnecessarily with your own voice.

• Being aware of your own learning process, being prepared to listen openly to constructive critique, suggestions and group members' evaluation of sessions / lessons.

46

716

Roles for Facilitators

None of us comes to the task of facilitation from a neutral position, because we all have our own set of values and beliefs. In most circumstances, however, the facilitator is expected to maintain a high degree of objectivity and fairness in order to ensure that all group members, with all of their different life experiences, feelings and views, feel valued and able to participate equally in the group process.

Having clearly set this baseline, it is sometimes appropriate for the facilitator to take on a particular role in order to enhance the group's learning or to challenge their thinking in a new way. It is important that these roles are taken on self-consciously, for a specific purpose and time. It also needs to be done in a way that signals this to the group, and lets them know that respect, fairness and the other group ground rules have not been set aside. A number of possible roles (and there are many others) are outlined below.[2]

Questions for Reflection: Preparation for Groupwork

How can I establish an appropriate atmosphere for the group to work in?

What will I need to do to ensure that all group members feel safe to participate?

How will I ensure a balance in the participation of group members?

How will I need to speak and act in order to demonstrate fairness?

How comfortable am I with silence? Do I sometimes rush on too quickly? If so, what strategies can I use to manage this better?

How will I ensure that the purpose of the group's time together is appropriately met? Am I personally clear about the group's purpose?

What strategies can I use to start and end the session effectively?

What will I do if energy flags within the group?

How attached am I to the lesson / session plan? Have I room to be flexible if necessary?

47

Facilitation Roles

ROLE	DESCRIPTION	ADVANTAGES	PITFALLS
NEUTRAL FACILITATOR	Enabling the group to explore a range of viewpoints without stating your own opinion.	As you are clearly not taking sides, this can help facilitate an open exchange of views.	No one is 'neutral', so pretending that you are can be unhelpful to the development of trust within the group.
ADVOCATE	Raising perspectives which are the authentic beliefs of other individuals and groups.	Represents alternative views and experiences which may not be represented within the group. This can also stimulate responses, and demonstrate that there are equally strong (and possibly valid) positions which do not match with their own.	Can leave the group confused as to what you actually believe.
DECLARED INTERESTS	Begin by declaring your own position so that the group knows your views.	May help the group understand that you cannot be neutral. They need to give your views the consideration that they would give to anyone else's.	Some may be dismissive of your views because of your stated position at the outset (i.e. they associate a whole list of characteristics and opinions with the ones you have expressed). It may inhibit group members who disagree with your views.

48

717

718

ROLE	DESCRIPTION	ADVANTAGES	PITFALLS
ALLY	Supporting the views of a particular sub-group or individual (usually a minority) within the group.	Can really help people who are intimidated in a minority position, can help them express and clarify their position.	As you are not necessarily expressing your own views, this can be misleading. The minority group may feel pressured to speak when they are not ready.
OFFICIAL VIEW	Letting the group know the official position of your employer / organisation / statutory authority / the law / etc. This might not be your own view.	Can help the group understand the context in which you and they are working, and any limitations which this may set.	Group may sense any contradiction between your views and the 'establishment' ones which may not always be helpful, as it may raise tensions which may be difficult to resolve.
CHALLENGER	Through questioning, challenging views being expressed, encouraging people to justify their position.	Encourages people to think about their opinions, gets them used to challenge in a relatively safe environment.	The challenge could be too much for someone who already finds it difficult to speak within the group. If challenged, they may be reluctant to speak again.

49

All of the roles outlined above can have their uses within a groupwork setting. In each case it is important to weigh up the possible advantages and pitfalls, and the specific appropriateness or otherwise for a particular group and programme at a particular time.

Questions for Reflection

Can I think of situations where some of these roles might be useful in my facilitation?

Do I sometimes take on any of these roles without intending to?

What are the particular characteristics of the group with which I am working that I need to bear in mind in deciding to take on any of these roles?

Are there additional advantages or pitfalls for these roles that I can envisage within my particular circumstances?

Are there other roles that I can imagine that might be useful to me?

What do I need to do to ensure that I maintain respect, fairness and the other ground rules at all times within my facilitation?

Managing Change

One of the key areas of responsibility for the facilitator is the management of change within the group. Among other possibilities, this could take the form of changes in:

- *the membership or facilitation of the group;*
- *the way group members relate to and interact with each other;*
- *your relationship with group members;*
- *the group's purpose and direction;*
- *attitudes, opinions and behaviour of group members;*
- *or a combination of the above.*

In order to support group members in engaging positively with change, it will be important that the facilitator:

- affirms and encourages group members, individually and as a group;

- maintains a positive perspective on what can be learned from or gained through change;

- helps the group to recognise the value of past experiences and learning, but not to remain stuck in them;

- assists the group in describing and reflecting on the present situation, and to make connections across their learning;

- explores with the group any unwillingness or uncertainty about moving forward;

- encourages the group to think creatively about future possibilities and ways of working towards them.

It is important to bear in mind that the facilitator also needs opportunities to de-brief and to receive support.

50

720

In exploring controversial issues relating to diversity, such as prejudice, stereotyping and discrimination, it is highly likely that it will involve attitudinal challenge and change for at least some group members. In these circumstances, it will be important:

• to appropriately notice and affirm learning that has taken place;

• not to rubbish or condemn previous attitudes and beliefs;

• if those who have changed or those who have not are in a small minority within the group, not to isolate them or cause them to feel unsafe or vulnerable;

• to be aware that these changes often involve a level of risk, for example, in terms of peer, family or community relationships, and ensure that they are given appropriate support. See Beyond Programmes: Learning for Life (Section Seven).

NB. All attitudinal change is likely to involve some level of risk-taking and personal vulnerability, for example, because previously held beliefs may now be seen as wrong or because it may involve stepping out from the crowd. At a certain level, this risk-taking and vulnerability, if handled positively and supportively, is part of what allows the learning to take place. However, if the risk level is high, the support available must be correspondingly so.

Questions for Reflection

How do I feel about change in general? Do I usually feel comfortable with it, or threatened by it?

Am I aware of potential changes within the group's experience?

How can I support the group in responding positively to these changes?

Is there particular support needed by group members with regard to attitudinal change?

Do I need support (for example, resources, a co-facilitator) myself in order to provide these kinds of support to the group?

What strategies can I use with the group to reflect on the changes which may have taken place?

51

The Facilitation Process: Managing Change

Outlined below are a number of scenarios, based on real life examples, for you to consider how the theory of managing change might translate into everyday practice. Drawing on the ideas within the Managing Change section and elsewhere in the resource, how might you respond to the situations outlined below?

Alternatively, or additionally, consider examples from your own experience – reflecting on them now, what might you do the same and what might you do differently?

1   A new pupil joins your class in March. You are aware that s/he has struggled with some behavioural issues in her / his previous school.

How can you best support her / his positive integration into the class group?

2   The school's Parents' Group has previously had an almost exclusively fundraising role. Now you (as principal / senior management team) would like them to also act as a consultation focus group to provide input and feedback to staff who are revising some of the school's key policies. The Group has agreed, but members are unsure of their ability to do it.

How can you assist them with this transition?

3   Up until now the staffroom in the school has always actually been the 'teachers' room'. As you (principal / senior management team) develop a whole school approach, you want to change this so that the room is welcoming for all staff.

What can you do to build a sense of team among staff, and a shared wish for this to happen?

4   A new teacher has joined the staff in your department / Key Stage team, and makes it known that they are gay / lesbian.
As department head / Key Stage head, you become aware of explicit and implicit prejudice among other staff which is making it difficult for the new teacher to settle in.

What can you do to address this?

3.3
Co-facilitation: Working Together

There will be times when it will be valuable to work with a co-facilitator (such as a colleague, a youth worker, an ELB officer), for example, when you:

- want to try something for the first time;

- want to try something more challenging and invite someone with more experience in that area or way of working to give you some support;

- are planning to explore more controversial issues with a group and feel that another facilitator's perspective and support would be beneficial;

- are working with a group in which a significant number of members are dealing with particular pastoral or behavioural issues;

- want to divide a large group into smaller facilitated groups for particular sessions or activities.

For Co-facilitation to be Productive and Creative:

• Each facilitator needs to be aware of and value the contribution of the other(s).

• Each facilitator needs to be very clear about their role and contribution.

• All facilitators need to be clear and in agreement about the purpose of the group.

• All facilitators need to be prepared to discuss fully conflicts, tensions, feelings, etc. which may be raised through their joint work and group experience.

• All facilitators need to be willing to value their differences in perceptions, styles and approaches.

• All facilitators need to collaborate, share, trust and talk to each other in and out of the group setting. The ability of the group to share and to deal with conflict and interpersonal issues is directly related to how effective the co-facilitators are at this.[3]

Benefits and Complications

When deciding whether co-facilitation is the best approach for your work with a particular group, being aware of some of the benefits and complications may help you make that decision.

THE BENEFITS

• It increases the resources available to the group and can be enriching. For example, male / female, older / younger, different backgrounds, or just two different people with different ideas and styles of facilitation.

• It may provide a model of co-operation which is useful for group members' learning.

• It reduces the pressure on the facilitator because there is a shared responsibility for guiding the group, feeding in observations, ideas and information, responding to group needs, etc.

• The two facilitators can take responsibility for different emphases. For example, one might promote the task to be achieved while the other promotes the positive relationships within the group.

• It can provide mutual support and enjoyment for the facilitators if they are compatible and work well together. Sufficient time spent preparing together will give some indication of compatibility and ensure that both facilitators go into the group session feeling confident about the way they plan to work together.

• It can add weight to the leadership of the group so that it is more seriously regarded.

• It can increase the effectiveness of the facilitators' reflection, evaluation and personal learning as the two facilitators can give each other feedback and reflect together on the experience.

• It can free one facilitator to observe without distraction or other responsibilities and feed back these observations to the group.

• It can free one facilitator to look after any unexpected event or crisis while the other attends to the group process as a whole.

• It can offer a novice the opportunity to learn through mentoring or two novices to learn together.

3 Adapted from J. Benson (1997), *Working More Creatively with Groups*, London, Routledge.

53

722

☑ Preparation for Co-facilitation

THE COMPLICATIONS:

• It can involve irksome and unnecessary extra planning. Joint preparation and evaluation is essential, so it is important to be aware of the additional time this may take.

• Co-facilitators are a role model of collaboration, trust and a creative relationship, so a lot is at stake if the partnership is not successful. Group members will very quickly become aware, for example, of any discrepancy between the values being promoted in the ground rules and the way the two facilitators interact with each other.

• Conflict between facilitators can undermine the group and its purpose, causing anxiety and splits within the group. It is, however, important to note that total agreement and harmony can give a message to group members that conflict is 'not OK'.

• It is essential to clarify roles and responsibilities when there is more than one facilitator.

• The facilitators may have to consult each other within the group when on-the-spot responses / decisions have to be made.

• It can be more expensive in terms of time, people and money. In some situations, co-facilitation may simply not be an option.

AGREEING PURPOSE AND PROCESS FOR WORKING TOGETHER

• What does each facilitator see as the core purpose of the group's time together?

• What are each of the facilitators' hopes for the group's time together?

• What ways can the facilitators support each other? Are there particular concerns that one or other of the facilitators has about the work?

• How will the facilitators communicate with each other during the session when, for example:

• *one facilitator wants the other to take on the main leadership for a while, or for a particular activity / discussion?*

• *there is a pastoral or behavioural issue which requires a response?*

• *they need to 'check out' the mood within the group, one facilitator feels that the group needs a break, etc.?*

• *the facilitators themselves need time out to discuss something?*

NB. It will be important to sit where you can see each other!

54

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- What roles / responsibilities will each facilitator undertake? For example:

- *Who will open and close the session, lead particular activities or discussions, facilitate group evaluation, etc.?*
- *Will one facilitator take more of a lead while the other takes on the task of observation and feedback if this is needed, or will they alternate?*
- *Who will keep an eye on timekeeping?*

NB. Even if you are not facilitating at a particular point, you need to participate in ways that will continue to enable group members' learning. If you respond first to all of your co-facilitator's questions or 'jump in' to take leadership in an unfacilitated small group, for example, you will be undermining your co-facilitator's work and limiting opportunities for group members to participate and learn.

- Are there key ground rules which each facilitator feels will be important for facilitation as well as for the group as a whole? What atmosphere do you want to try to create when the group begins?

- What needs to be said to the group so that they are clear about who the facilitators are and what their roles / tasks are?

- What practical planning needs to be done? Are there particular resources each facilitator needs to bring / prepare?

EVALUATION

- When will the facilitators meet to debrief, give each other feedback and do any written evaluation, etc. that is required?

Co-facilitation: Working Together

Outlined below are a number of scenarios, based on real life examples, for you to consider how the theory of co-facilitation might translate into everyday practice. Drawing on the ideas within the Co-facilitation section and elsewhere in the resource, how might you respond to the situations outlined below?

Alternatively, or additionally, consider examples from your own experience – reflecting on them now, what might you do the same and what might you do differently?

1 You are about to embark on a groupwork-based programme exploring prejudice and discrimination within the local community with your class group / staff group. This is a new way of working for you and within your budget you have the option of asking a local youth worker with experience in this kind of work to co-facilitate with you.

What would be the possible benefits?
What would be the possible complications?
Are there other facilitation possibilities?
Based on these factors, what do you decide?
Why have you made this decision?

2 You become aware of some parents' lack of familiarity and resulting unease with one of your new school policies. They find it jargonistic and feel that they could have been consulted. You want to facilitate a meeting for them but are aware that some of their frustration is aimed at you as principal / co-ordinator with responsibility for the policy. You have the option of co-facilitating this meeting with the chairperson of your Board of Governors, or of inviting in an ELB officer as an external facilitator. Both of these people are knowledgeable and supportive.

What would be the possible benefits?
What would be the possible complications?
Are there other facilitation possibilities?
Based on these factors, what do you decide?
Why have you made this decision?

55

3 As caretaker / secretary / playground supervisor / classroom assistant you have just returned from an intensive Child Protection / Safeguarding training course. Your principal would like you to share this learning with all the staff in the school and is confident that you will do a good job. You know your material, but feel very nervous about facilitating a session for your peers and senior management team. You have the option of asking a staff member from another local school, who also did the course, to co-facilitate, and then you would also work with them in their school.

What would be the possible benefits?
What would be the possible complications?
Are there other facilitation possibilities?
Based on these factors, what do you decide?
Why have you made this decision?

3.4
Personal Preparation for Facilitation

'Teachers affect eternity: no one can tell where their influence stops.' Henry Adams

Each one of us is shaped by our life experiences, the people around us, and numerous other factors. Each one of us has a value base and belief system which affects the way we view the world and relate to other people.

Given the powerful position which facilitators hold within a group, it is important that this is recognised, and that they understand what they are bringing, both positive and negative, to their facilitation role.

Values are:

'principles, fundamental convictions, ideals, standards or life stances which act as general guides to behaviour or as reference points in decision-making or the evaluation of beliefs or action . . .' [4]

Values and Self-reflection

All facilitators need to give honest attention to their own value base, life experiences and attitudes. This process of self-reflection means exploring thoughts, attitudes, feelings, reactions, etc. It involves recognising and acknowledging how these impact on, among other things:

4 Taylor, M.J. (1998), Values Education and Values in Education, London, Association of Teachers and Lecturers.

- how I relate to pupils, parents and colleagues;

- the teaching and discipline styles I use;

- the information I choose to share about particular historical or contemporary events and situations;

- anxieties I may have about exploring certain issues.

Values are not restricted to religious education, assemblies, pastoral care, etc. although these may be the places where they are made most explicit. The whole ethos of the school will be shaped by the dominant values within it, just as the ethos of each classroom is likely to be shaped largely by the values of the teacher. It is important, therefore, to be aware of these and of their implications in practice.

These values:

- are conveyed in teaching and learning processes;

- are embedded in school structures, management, policies, language and relationships;

- can be both explicit and implicit;

- can be 'substantive values' (such as honesty, respect) and 'process values' (such as reflection, caring);

- reflect the values and structures of society and the education system, including curriculum, inspection and assessment approaches.[5]

Questions for Reflection: Value Base

What do I believe is the purpose of education?

What are the values that underpin my work as an educator?

What are my assumptions about children / young people, colleagues, other adults in the school community?

What are the most important things I bring to the classroom / school?

What are the most important things the children / young people bring to the classroom / school?

What values am I conveying through my way of working? Are these the ones I intend to convey? Am I consistent? How do I know this?

Building Support Structures

A Whole School Approach is the most effective structure for enabling staff, pupils and others in the school community to explore themes, some of which might be contentious, that may arise relating to diversity, within the Citizenship framework. See Creating an Inclusive Learning Community: A Whole School Approach (Section Two).

A whole school approach to which all in the school community are committed, particularly the Board of Governors and the senior management team, means that appropriate support can be given to all those involved. For example:

- The work is given a recognised place within the overall prioritising of teaching and learning so that individuals are not left feeling that if they do specific work around

5 Adapted from Taylor, M.J. (1998), Values Education & Values in Education, London, Association of Teachers and Lecturers.

diversity and controversial issues they will be penalised in some way for not adequately covering prescribed areas of curriculum content.

• If a parent expresses concern about or criticism of work being done in the classroom, the staff member involved can be certain that s/he will have the support of the senior management team in talking with the parent, and will not somehow be scapegoated.

• All staff will be supported with sufficient development and training opportunities to enable them to facilitate intentional work in the classroom, to respond to topics which arise (for example, as a consequence of events in the local community or reported in the media) and to address incidents of prejudice, discrimination or bullying. Ideally, this will include opportunities to reflect on their practice through a supervision type model.*

• All staff will have practical support in terms of both financial and physical resources, adequate planning and evaluation time, recognised lesson time within the curriculum to deliver the work.

Support Through Supervision

Supervision has an everyday meaning relating to management. Supervision in the sense that we are using it here, however, is primarily a relationship that enables the staff to explore issues relating to their work. It allows staff to:

- *look back at recent work;*
- *explore the successes and dilemmas which may have arisen through it;*
- *give validation to skills;*
- *consider how to progress with future work;*
- *assure quality and professionalism;*
- *reflect on personal learning and development to date, and future training / support needs.*

Supervision is most effective when there is a positive professional relationship between the practitioner and the supervisor, and when it takes place regularly, possibly once a month. In a school setting, it may be that once a term is more realistic. The supervisor can be someone from within the workplace structures (for example, the principal or a member of the senior management team) or someone external (known as an 'off-line' supervisor).

Where supervision is not available, use other informal, but regular support structures on a monthly or termly basis, for example, meeting with a colleague from your own or another school, an ELB advisor, another experienced teacher, possibly one who has recently retired.

Practically, it is important that all staff:

• work together in developing programmes as this provides opportunities to share ideas, to check out planned activities with others who may have experience of using them, to ensure that programmes are developmental and consistent across different year groups, and to evaluate programmes together;

58

728

- ensure that senior management team members are involved in this process so that they have clear information and can give their backing to the programme;

- work with senior management team members to make parents aware of the work being undertaken;

- draw on other support structures as appropriate, for example, through the ELB and relevant voluntary agencies.

Questions for Reflection

Is there a whole school approach in place which supports this kind of work?

Within my work context, what possibilities do I have for carrying out this kind of work?

What support do I need to carry out the work?

Who can help me with programme planning, evaluation, etc.?

How can I work best with the senior management team?

Can parents and others be involved in the process? How can this best be done?

Is supervision a possibility? Where else can I reflect on and learn from my practice?

Preparing for Facilitation: Encountering Diversity

In addition to personal reflection on value base, experiences, attitudes, feelings, etc., facilitators need opportunities to explore these with other people in a similarly safe environment to that which they will create for the children, young people and adults with whom they work.

One way of doing this is to instigate some structured or informal conversation around the issues in question with friends or colleagues who have different views and life experiences. This kind of experience could also be provided through development / training sessions: some suggestions are given below.

You could . . .

- intentionally include diversity issues as a theme for internal staff development days;

- organise joint training / development sessions with your Schools Community Relations Programme partner school(s);

- visit local faith centres, churches and others;

- invite pupils and / or parents from ethnic minority communities to facilitate sessions and / or provide information input to staff, governors and parents;

- invite a panel of local politicians to speak on a particular theme or for a question and answer session;

- hold a disability awareness workshop for governors and staff, drawing on the experience and skills of pupils and parents;

- organise a tour for staff living outside the school's local community, led by, for example, parents or local youth / community workers.

59

As well as having inherent value in itself in deepening personal understanding and relationships, the benefit of this experience is that it:

• allows you to feel the fears and other emotions which group members may also hold;

• provides you with meaningful insights into other perspectives and the life experiences which shape them. This is important if you are working in an environment where everyone comes from a similar background;

• demonstrates that you value the reflection process and do not expect group members to take risks which you have not also experienced in some form;

• enables you to increase your knowledge base in relation to, for example, historical events, flags and symbols, political structures, relevant legislation, etc. This needs to be qualified, however, by recognising that you are not expected to be an expert, and that a response such as, 'I don't know the answer to that question, but I will try to find out for our next session' is an appropriate part of the facilitation process.

Questions for Reflection

What are my concerns and fears about exploring diversity?

What are my attitudes / feelings towards people whose:
• *religion;*
• *ethnic background;*
• *cultural background;*
• *political views and affiliation;*
• *sexual orientation;*
• *physical and learning abilities;*
• *social background;*
is / are different to my own?

Do I have prejudices which I need to examine?

What opportunities do I have to explore life experiences, attitudes, etc. with people from backgrounds different to my own?

Where can I learn more about different traditions, symbols, flags, etc.?

What opportunities are there to bring these aspects into my work?

To what extent am I prepared to talk about my personal experiences, values, beliefs, etc.
• *with colleagues and other adults?*
• *with pupils?*

60

Developing Facilitation Skills

Facilitation involves a wide range of skills, and it is important that the facilitator models the behaviour and skills which they would like group members to develop. The facilitator, therefore, may need some training support in order to feel confident and competent in her / his facilitation.

Some of the skills which are important for facilitators include:

Group Awareness
It is important for the facilitator to be sensitive to the needs, interests and 'mood' of the group and individuals. Group members may volunteer information but the facilitator also needs to be aware of non-verbal communication (body language, etc.) and to be able to draw out further information. See Group Members and Group Dynamics (Section Three).

Enabling Participation
It is the facilitator's responsibility to ensure that all group members can participate as they feel comfortable, helping the group keep to its contract and maintain the 'safe space': ensuring confident group members do not dominate discussion, and encouraging quieter members to have their say. See Enabling Group Members (Section Three).

Active Listening
This is about absorbing what a person has said, and ensuring that s/he knows that s/he has been heard by giving both verbal and non-verbal responses. It means giving a person your whole attention, and does not mean that you are busily thinking about your reply while s/he is speaking. See Developing Skills within a Group (Section Five).

Giving and Receiving Feedback
This can be about giving affirmation to group members for their skills, contribution to the group process or tasks, etc. It may also be about respectfully and appropriately challenging group members to consider their strengths and weaknesses, to try new things, to look at a situation from different perspectives, etc. See Section Three (Enabling Group Members).

Critical and Creative Thinking
A facilitator needs to be able to reflect on a range of perspectives and ideas, and be able to support group members in exploring different ways of understanding these. Where problem-solving is involved, s/he also needs to be able to enable the group to think creatively about a range of possible solutions or outcomes.

Positive Ways of Approaching Conflict
Where strong differences of opinion are expressed within a group, it is important that the facilitator supports the group in working through any conflict that may emerge. As well as helping the group to keep to their contract, this might include sharing skills in relation to negotiation, mediation, etc. See Managing Conflict (Section Four).

Enabling Closure
The facilitator needs to support the group in bringing a session to an appropriate close, so that everyone is able to move on to whatever they are doing next. S/he also needs to support the group when a programme is ending, so successes and learning can be celebrated and strategies for the next stage can be planned. See The Importance of Closure (Section Five).

The development of skills and confidence is ongoing and increases through experience, but it is good to have some grasp of these skills in starting out to work with a group.

61

Questions for Reflection

What skills do I feel confident about?

Which skills do I need to work at?

Where can I get support in developing these skills?

Are there situations when it would be helpful to have a co-facilitator?

How can I share these skills and support group members in developing them?

3.5
Building Positive Relationships
Between the Facilitator and
Group Members

As well as the facilitator's personal preparation, there are a range of other aspects which need to be given attention in order to create a 'safe space' for groupwork. Building positive relationships with group members and enabling them to become familiar with ways of working as a group will help to create a framework for exploring issues, including more controversial ones, together.

Questions for Reflection

Do I really care about each pupil in my class?

Do I speak respectfully to each pupil?

Do I regularly acknowledge the positive attributes of each young person?

Do I expect certain pupils to misbehave?

Do I assume certain pupils are guilty before establishing the facts?

Am I able to apologise to any pupil if I have reacted unjustly?

Am I able to deal positively with conflict?

Is my body language consistent with the words I use to each pupil?

Do I organise the curriculum, recognising the diversity of learning styles, so that it's possible for every pupil to achieve daily moments of success, which I then take time to notice? [6]

Also consider these questions in terms of: the members of my staff team; the parents; the governors; any other group members I work with.

6 Adapted from Jenny Mosley (2000), Quality Circle Time in the Primary Classroom, Wisbech, LDA.

62

Aspects of the Relationship between the Facilitator and Group Members

FACILITATOR ➡️

VALUING / RESPECT
UNDERSTANDING / INSIGHT
LISTENING
SUPPORTING / ENABLING
COMMUNITY / CULTURAL AWARENESS
POSITIVE EXPECTATIONS
ABSENCE OF LABELLING / PREJUDICE
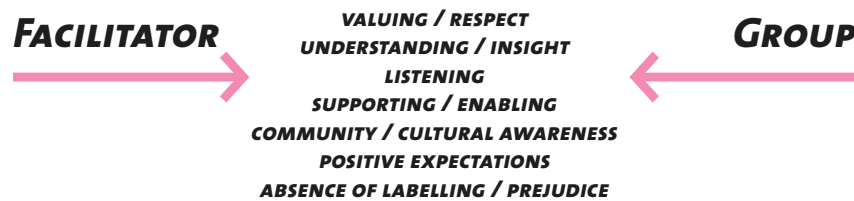
⬅️ **GROUP**

Positive relationships help create a sense of being a team and encourage the group to support each other and work together. This involves:

• valuing each person and getting to know her / his talents, interests, needs and concerns;

• listening to and affirming each person;

• enabling everyone to participate fully by providing learning opportunities suitable for different abilities, needs and learning styles;

• developing an understanding of the community and cultural contexts within which they live, particularly if members of staff live outside the school area or come from a different background to some or all of the pupils;

• being aware of events and relationships within local communities which may impact on individuals or groups, and can affect the level of risk-taking involved in exploring certain issues or in meeting groups from different backgrounds.

Questions for Reflection

How well do you know the local community within which the school is situated?

How well do you understand the cultural / religious / political background of the children, young people and adults who make up the school community?

What do you know? Are these facts, assumptions or judgements?

What issues are being faced by the children, young people and adults who make up the school community?

What spaces are created to discuss these life issues? What support do they have?

What is appropriate in terms of exploration / intervention within the classroom or school?

What is the purpose of the work being undertaken with them?

Is there a 'change' agenda?

63

It is important to keep a balance between this kind of 'helpful awareness', while avoiding preconceived judgements based upon past experience, perceptions of the community, or what has been said in the staffroom, etc. Try to avoid:

Labelling
perceiving someone as 'quiet', 'a troublemaker', 'someone who overreacts' with the inherent assumption that s/he 'always' (or mostly) has been and will be like this.

Prejudice
feelings or attitudes towards a group or individual without reasonable knowledge of that group or individual.

Transference
where someone within the group reminds you of someone outside the group, and you assume that the group member will also be like that person in other ways.

Projection
putting your own traits, feelings, attitudes, etc. onto group members and assuming that they will respond and act in the same way that you do.

Scapegoating
placing the blame for things that go wrong, negative feelings, etc. on one group member, whether or not there is any justification for this.

☑

Practical Points

• What do I want to be called by the group? For example, if I am working with a class, am I happy for them to use my first name or not? All the time? Just for this kind of lesson / module? Just during name games / activities? Not at all?

• How will I learn the names of group members, if I don't already know them? Name badges? Name game? Introductions? Reminder activities? Other possibilities? See Developing Programmes for Children, Young People and Adults (Section Five).

• What kind of relationship do I want with this group? Why? What style of working will best assist this? What ground rules will best frame this?

• How will group members benefit from this relationship in terms of learning, enjoyment, etc.?

3.6
Group Members and Group Dynamics

Group members are the individuals who make up the group. The term 'group dynamics' is used to describe the nature of the relationships and interactions between these individuals.

Every group, whether it is a class or smaller group of pupils, a staff team or a gathering of other adults within the school community, is made up of individuals who each bring their own skills, needs and life experience to the process. The way each individual behaves and contributes to the group process will be shaped by these factors, and this in turn will play a part in shaping the dynamics within the group as a whole. It is crucially important, therefore, that the facilitator pays attention to these, both because they will be the source of much of the group's learning and because the group may need support in addressing particular issues or conflicts which emerge from them.

What Group Members Bring

In working with any group, some aspects to consider are:

AGE AND LIFE EXPERIENCE
While some aspects of life experience can be loosely determined by age, others vary widely from person to person. Life experience is probably the most important factor in shaping what individuals bring to a group. For example:

- a child who has lived in different places may bring a positive experience of diversity which others in a class may not have;

- a staff member who lives within the local community will bring a knowledge of pupils' day-to-day environment, which those who come from elsewhere may not have;

- a group of young people who have experienced tragedy will bring an insight into grief and its related feelings and struggles which others may not have;

- a parent or governor may bring particular skills from their area of work (within or outside the home) while others may bring different ones.

Without prejudging individuals within a group, it can be helpful to know something of their life story so that sensitivity can be applied to areas which they may find challenging or difficult. While this does not mean avoiding these areas, it is important to remember that this kind of groupwork is not counselling, and if particular behavioural or emotional difficulties arise, it may be appropriate to offer further support elsewhere. See Beyond Programmes: Learning for Life (Section Seven).

SELF-ESTEEM AND CONFIDENCE
Some of the key ingredients of positive self-esteem include:

- *feeling physically safe;*
- *feeling emotionally safe;*
- *having a sense of personal identity;*
- *having a sense of belonging;*
- *feeling capable and effective;*
- *having a sense of purpose and meaning.*

The extent to which group members experience these will affect how they participate within the group. It may be valuable to include some activities within the programme which, as part of their purpose, are aimed specifically at building group members' self-esteem and confidence.

65

With regard to work around community relations or other controversial issues, people who are confident about and secure in their own sense of identity are likely to feel less threatened by difference. This means that they will be more able to engage in exploration of controversial issues, to gain positive learning from the experience and to deal effectively with any conflict which may arise.

Building a positive atmosphere in the classroom / school in general and for groupwork specifically is easiest when you feel good about yourself. Similarly, it is difficult to build the self-esteem of participants if you yourself have low self-esteem.

• Take time to think about the different things, big and small, which you have achieved over the past week, month, year. If you find this difficult, ask a friend or colleague to help you!

• Everyone has bad days, so do not blame yourself unnecessarily for these. Instead, be honest with the group about how you're feeling, adapt the session to or swap it with one that you can manage more easily or postpone it to a better time.

MULTIPLE INTELLIGENCES & LEARNING STYLES

Rather than thinking of intelligence in purely academic terms, Howard Gardner[7] has identified at least nine intelligences which individuals have to different extents.

1 Interpersonal
the capacity to understand and work well with others.

2 Intrapersonal
the capacity to understand oneself and learn through reflection.

3 Kinesthetic
the capacity to use mental abilities to co-ordinate bodily movements in effective ways.

4 Linguistic
the capacity to respond to and use language effectively.

5 Logical / Mathematical
the capacity to investigate and analyse problems logically and scientifically.

6 Musical
the capacity to appreciate, compose and perform music.

7 Naturalist
the capacity to appreciate, explore and understand aspects of nature and the environment.

8 Visual / Spatial
the capacity to understand the dimensions and possibilities of different kinds of visual space, and to be creative with this.

9 Existentialist
the capacity to explore and understand in spiritual and philosophical terms.

7 Gardner, H. (1993), Frames of Mind: The Theory of Multiple Intelligences (2nd Edition), London, Fontana Press. (He has adapted and added to his list of intelligences over time.)

66

This will affect how individuals participate in terms of the things which interest them, the aspects which they pick up or respond to most quickly, etc. By its very nature, group-work demands that all group members use their intrapersonal and interpersonal intelligence (defined by Daniel Goleman as 'emotional intelligence').[8] Developing skills in these two areas will increase the effectiveness of group members' participation and learning through the process. Again, it is likely to be useful for the facilitator to include activities within the programme which have such skills development as part of their purpose. This emotional literacy is a necessary and valuable skill for group members in all aspects of their lives.

The recognition that individuals do not have a fixed amount of intelligence means that our capacity for learning is effectively limitless, and, aside from the important issues of respect and self-esteem, make labels such as 'bright' and 'stupid' meaningless. Individuals do, however, learn most effectively in different ways or combinations of ways, as defined below:

1   Visual learning
people who learn best by seeing, for example, reading, looking at diagrams, maps or pictures, etc.

2   Auditory learning
people who learn best by hearing, for example, listening to a talk or lecture, learning by association with particular music, etc.

3   Kinesthetic learning
people who learn best by doing, for example, by trying experiments, making things with their hands, using drama or role-play, etc.

Facilitators, teachers and leaders have a tendency to work out of their own preferred learning style and should be aware of providing for a range of learning styles to maximise the opportunities for all participants.

The ability to learn is also affected by our past experiences, how we feel about learning and the situations in which we find ourselves. Again this reminds us of the importance of self-esteem, and of the facilitator's need to be aware of the emotions that are being experienced during group sessions.

You might want to consider doing an intelligences or learning styles questionnaire in order to reflect on your own strengths, weaknesses and preferred learning styles. The purpose of this is not to put you in a box, but to assist with self-reflection and awareness, and to enable you to broaden the range and types of activity which you include when facilitating a group.

There are a number of websites which offer such questionnaires, for example: **www.ldpride.net/learningstyles.mi.htm**

8 Goleman, D. (1996), Emotional Intelligence, London, Bloomsbury Publishing.

67

EXPECTATIONS

Each group member will come to the process with different hopes and fears. This may affect their expectations of the process and their willingness to engage with it. The first time the group meets, it is likely to be valuable for the facilitator to create a space for group members to express (anonymously or directly) some of these hopes and fears. By doing this, fears can be allayed, and, as appropriate, hopes can play a part in shaping the process or programme. If some hopes or expectations are unreasonable within the possibilities of the group, this can be clarified and the purpose of the group's time together explained again.

It is important to recognise here that within a school context, some people may have a choice about participating and others may not. Where participation is compulsory, clarity about the purpose of the group's time together is especially valuable. If the facilitator can give attention to group members' hopes and work to allay any concerns or fears, this is likely to increase group members' willingness to engage with the process. Being aware of their interests and particular skills will help the facilitator to find 'hooks' which will draw their attention and enthusiasm for the process. For example:

•   children (or adults) with a preference for kinesthetic learning will be drawn into the process more quickly through interactive exercises than by listening to a talk;

•   teachers are likely to feel happier about participating in a groupwork activity when they can see its direct relevance to the specific challenges which they are facing in their classrooms;

•   young people's interest is likely to be sparked by a theme which relates directly and realistically to their life experience outside school;

•   support staff are likely to be more willing to give extra time to participate in training sessions when they feel their contribution to the school is clearly and specifically valued.

Questions for Reflection

Take time to reflect on your own:
•   *self-esteem and confidence;*
•   *intelligence strengths and weaknesses;*
•   *preferred learning style;*
•   *hopes and fears.*
How might these affect the way I facilitate the group?

Have I included activities within the programme that will help to build individual group members' self-esteem and confidence?

Have I included a diverse range of activities to enable all group members to enjoy and learn from the group experience?

68

Personality Types and Group Roles

Within a group, individuals will participate in different ways. This will be partly shaped by personality, and it may at times appear that certain group members are taking on particular roles. Identifying these roles can be helpful in trying to develop an understanding of the relationships and dynamics within the group. However, it is important only to do so when bearing in mind that:

• role definitions apply to specific behaviours and not to the whole person;

• although some roles are disruptive to the group process, others are of benefit, and some can be both, depending on the context;

• some roles are very transitory while others appear to be more enduring, but each person has the potential and possibility of changing their behaviour;

• if the role is disruptive and needs to be challenged, highlight the specific behaviour and do not condemn the individual;

• identifying roles does not become a labelling of people which prevents them from participating differently within the group or that limits their personal development.

One of the purposes in identifying the roles of particular individuals is to encourage participation in the group process in different ways to the ones they habitually use.

Some roles that it may be helpful to look out for include: [9]
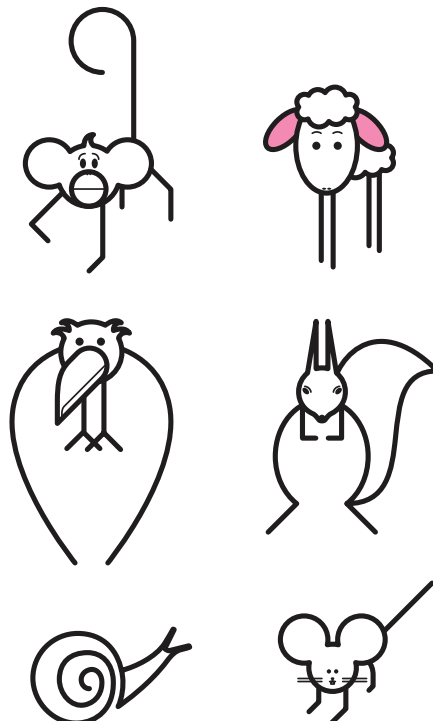
The Monkey
brings humour into the situation but can also chatter a lot and prevent serious discussion.

The Sheep
is a patient listener but can also follow the crowd instead of thinking for her / himself.

The Parrot
is a good talker but also incessantly answers back without taking time to listen.

The Squirrel
stores up all the anger and hurt inside.

The Snail
withdraws when under pressure and refuses to share her / his ideas and opinions.

The Mouse
quietly gets on with things but also finds it hard to speak up.

9 Naylor, Y. (2003), Who We Are: Dealing with Difference, Belfast, Irish School of Ecumenics.

69

Interaction and Group Dynamics

Within any group, there are numerous relationships developing, all at the same time. In a group of eight people, for example, there are 28 different relationships happening at any given time. In a class of 30 pupils plus one teacher, there are 465 relationships happening at any given time![10] It is these relationships which create the dynamics within a group, and the behaviour of one individual or a small group can affect all of them. The facilitator in particular needs to be aware of how her / his own mood, attitudes and behaviour can affect everyone else in the group.

Throughout the life of the group, ways of behaving and interacting develop between group members. As with the roles which people may take on as part of this process, some of these behaviours and interactions will be of benefit to the group while others may be detrimental. One of the facilitator's jobs is to ensure that there is a clear, agreed understanding of respectful behaviour within the group, for example, through the early development of a group contract which can be re-visited at different points throughout the group's life as necessary. If detrimental behaviours and interactions emerge as the group progresses, the facilitator needs to challenge them appropriately and support individuals or the group as a whole in addressing them. See Responding to Behaviour which is 'Challenging' (Section Three).

All groups will also experience conflict at some time or another. While this is a normal part of life, it does have the potential to be harmful rather than creative, so it is vital that it is managed effectively in order to reach as positive an outcome as possible. See Managing Conflict (Section Four).

It is within these interactions that enjoyment, creativity and learning take place. Groupwork is a relational, exploratory model of co-learning which is effective because of what participants bring to the process, supported by thoughtful and compassionate facilitation.

Questions for Reflection

What roles am I aware of within the group?

Am I using this awareness appropriately, or am I limiting people by labelling them?

How many relationships (using the formula) are happening within this group?

Can I see developments within group members' relationships and interactions as they get to know each other better and / or as the programme develops?

Are clear boundaries of respectful attitudes and behaviour being maintained?

What am I learning from group members and through my experience of the group process?

---

10 The formula for this is:
$$\frac{(\text{Number in Group}) \times (\text{Number in group, less one})}{2}$$
Kindred, M. (1995), Once Upon a Group, London, Roy Allen Print Ltd.

70

3.7
Enabling Group Members

☑

Group members have the right to expect:

- *consistency, fairness and honesty;*
- *recognition of worth, respect and consideration;*
- *that the facilitator develop and create new experiences;*
- *structure, direction and boundaries;*
- *protection of standards, norms and values;*
- *feedback, advice, suggestions;*
- *an increasing and proportionate role in making decisions;*
- *that the facilitator act as a model of legitimate and compassionate authority.*[11]

Creating the Learning Environment

When setting up the learning environment you need to consider the:

- *people who will be involved (who are they, how do they relate to each other);*
- *time of day, and amount of time you have;*
- *place in which you are working.*

Along with your facilitation, these factors will shape the learning that takes place. This learning will be most effective if the environment is defined by characteristics such as those listed in the diagram which follows.

The term, ***Democratic Classroom*** is becoming increasingly familiar, particularly within the context of Local and Global Citizenship. Groupwork is most effective when it takes place within such a democratic setting, and where:

- group members are supported to take responsibility for their own participation and learning;

- group members are significantly involved in programme planning, development and evaluation;

- the nature of the group process is inclusive and fully interactive;

- learning takes place through open and investigative questioning and discussion rather than purely didactic methods.

To be truly effective, the 'democratic classroom' needs to be underpinned by democratic approaches throughout the school. It is difficult, for example, to expect teachers to model democratic approaches within their classrooms if they do not experience a similar democracy in management styles, decision-making processes, etc. Similarly, if pupils experience a democratic approach in one classroom, but not elsewhere, it is likely to have a detrimental effect on their relationships with different adults in the school community and to leave them uncertain about what is expected of them in terms of their participation, behaviour, etc. Children, young people and adults alike will be quick to spot inconsistencies between what is being advocated in the classroom and what is being practised in the school as a whole. Democratic ways of working are not always familiar within a school setting and although there is some risk-taking involved, the learning and relational benefits can be enormous.

---

[11] From Benson, J. (1997), *Working More Creatively with Groups*, London, Routledge.

71

PEOPLE

Positive Learning Environment

CLARITY

INCLUSIVITY

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

HONESTY AND OPENNESS

CONSISTENCY

SAFETY

TRUST

TIME

PLACE
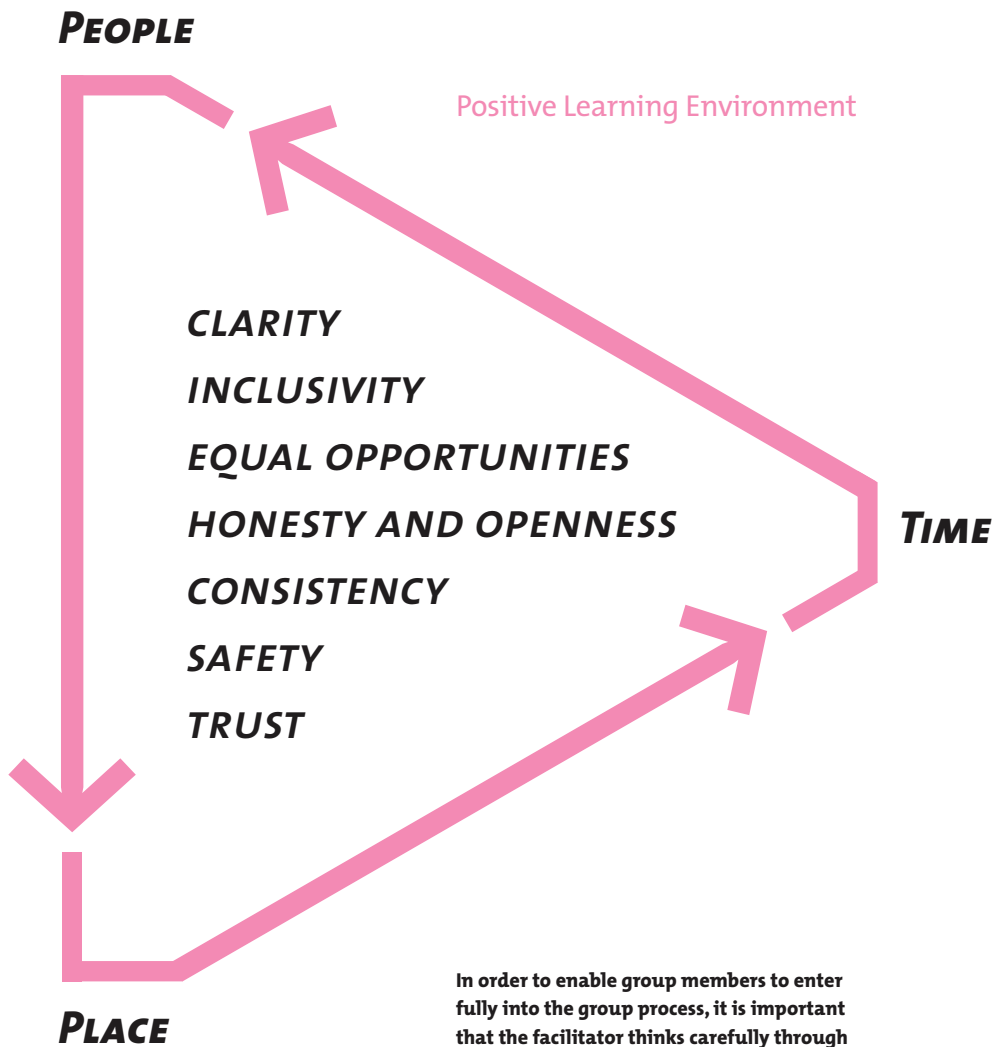
In order to enable group members to enter fully into the group process, it is important that the facilitator thinks carefully through the beginnings of the process and the gathering of the individual participants into a coherent, functioning group.

The creation of a 'safe space' in which the group can meet and learn together has an overarching significance, but there are also a number of specific factors which can be highlighted. The creation of a positive learning environment is about finding ways to maximise group members' participation for both their individual benefit and that of the group as a whole.

72

THE IMPORTANCE OF WELCOME

In many ways, the first session can set the tone for the rest of the group's time together. It will have a large impact on whether group members come back to the next session and / or the extent to which they are prepared to engage with the process. It is important that participants feel welcome when they enter the group space. This is not just about the words which the facilitator uses, but also the warm and inclusive atmosphere which s / he sets out to create.

Within the first session, this might include:

• Ensuring the room is physically comfortable in a way appropriate for the session's purpose.

• Having a starting ('bell') activity which will give people something to do when they arrive and may help them to feel less self-conscious. This could include anything from a structured exercise which encourages people to talk to each other, to offering a cup of tea or coffee.

• The facilitator speaking clear and inclusive words of welcome, backed up by welcoming body language and an overall style which is friendly and respectful.

• Giving people the opportunity to introduce themselves by the name they like to be called, and providing them with some guidance as to what information would be useful, with perhaps one piece of 'fun' information included, for example, your first name and why you were given it, your first name and your favourite film.

The factors which build this atmosphere of welcome need to be sustained throughout the group's life: it is not simply an 'act' for the opening session.

CLARITY ABOUT PURPOSE AND PROCESS

Group members will find it helpful to know what is expected of them in terms of participating, behaviour, etc. It is particularly important that they have a clear understanding of the purpose of the group's time together. A mismatch between the facilitator's and a group member's understanding of the group's purpose can lead to unnecessary frustrations and conflict which will have a negative effect on the experience of individuals and the group as a whole.

It is also important that the facilitator listens to the hopes and fears of group members about the process. As discussed above, where group members see evidence that their hopes and fears have been taken on board, they are likely to participate more fully and effectively in the overall process. Group members will feel more ownership of and commitment to the process where their views and ideas are included in programme development.

SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

As with most other aspects of their experience, each group member will come to the group with different skills and levels of skill. For the group's effectiveness, it can be valuable to include activities and exercises early in the process to ensure that all group members have a shared baseline of opportunity to develop skills that will be useful to them during the group's life and beyond. How each individual responds to the exercises will, of course, vary, but at the very least, some key skills, such as active listening and creative thinking will have been highlighted and can be revisited throughout the time the group is together. See Developing Skills within a Group (Section Five)

73

BUILDING A POSITIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

It is also important for the facilitator to be aware that previous group and life experiences may have bred negative 'skills' for some individuals or for the group as a whole. One example of this would be group members who have learnt to hide their feelings and opinions, especially about more controversial issues, because past experiences have taught them that these are not things to talk about in a classroom or professional setting. Specific time will be needed to address such 'skills' where they inhibit personal and group development and learning.

ENABLING PERSONAL SHARING

This kind of learning is not necessarily about right or wrong factual answers. It is about investigative approaches, hearing different perspectives and opinions, developing emotional literacy (including empathy), etc. Therefore, the life experiences, thoughts and views of each member of the group are needed so that all of the group can learn and develop. It is the facilitator's job to help people to feel confident and comfortable to do this in a way which is appropriate. This can be supported through strategies such as the following:

• activities which encourage the development of intra / interpersonal skills;

• creation of group guidelines or contract;

• the specific ground rule of using 'I' statements, avoiding the use of generalisations or assumptions about what others might think or experience;

• techniques such as a Circle Time round with a 'Sentence Starter' to aid the expression of feelings or experiences;

• the facilitator appropriately sharing some of her / his own experiences, feelings and views, encouraging a greater openness as group members become aware that the facilitator is not asking them to take risks that s/he is unwilling to take her / himself.

Ultimately, people are most likely to share their personal experiences, feelings and views when they feel that they are being listened to and valued. It is essential, however, that group members do not feel that they are being pressurised into taking risks in sharing personal information, etc. when they do not feel ready to do so or they do not feel it is appropriate.

DEALING WITH DIFFICULT OR DISRUPTIVE BEHAVIOUR

Disruptive behaviour does not just create difficulties for the facilitator, it affects everyone in the group. At its most extreme, it may intimidate or distress people to the extent that they decide not to come back to the group or not to participate in any way beyond what they absolutely have to. It is, therefore, essential that such behaviour is addressed promptly and appropriately, for the sake of all group members as well as for the individuals involved and the facilitator. It is important, however, for the facilitator to be aware of the (sometimes fine) distinctions between purely disruptive behaviour, and challenging behaviour which emerges as the result of an uncomfortable or controversial theme. If handled effectively, the latter can provide opportunities for personal reflection and learning for the wider group as well as for individuals directly involved. A fuller discussion of disruptive and challenging behaviour, and of some response strategies can be found in Responding to Behaviour which is 'Challenging' (Section Three).

GIVING FEEDBACK

Giving feedback is about the facilitator responding to what people say and do within the group setting. Working within the framework of respect and inclusivity, it is a skill which, among other things, can be used for checking out, affirming, encouraging, and challenging.

It is a valuable part of the facilitator's job for a number of reasons, for example:

- it allows the facilitator to check that s/he has understood the points, feelings, etc. someone is trying to convey;

- the facilitator can encourage and build a group member's self-esteem through commenting positively on her / his contribution to the group;

- it can be a tool for encouraging group members to take their learning further, through affirming what they have learnt, and asking questions which may encourage them to think even more broadly or deeply about something;

- the facilitator can also give feedback on negative behaviour or comments, respectfully challenging group members to think about their words or actions, and how they might participate differently.

The facilitator can also receive feedback from group members, peers and senior colleagues / tutors. Creating opportunities for them to give feedback will both demonstrate how they are valued and enhance their own skills. For the facilitator, this can be valuable for her / his personal and professional development, and for the development of the current and future programmes. This will be most useful if you:

- ask for it to be given in a helpful way (giving examples, positive as well as critical comment);

- listen all the way through;

- remember that it is their experiences of you and their perspectives on the situation;

- give yourself permission not to reply at once, and to take time to think about what has been said;

- give yourself permission to learn from mistakes.

75

For feedback to be useful, it needs to be:

• planned: consider when and where is most appropriate, how the person will feel, whether s/he has had previous negative experiences, how you hope to follow it up in a constructive way, etc;

• owned: 'This is my feedback to you', i.e. how I see the situation – there may well be other perspectives;

• clear;

• specific and behaviour-focused;

• balanced: highlight strengths / weaknesses;

• relevant and soon after the situation;

• regular and integral to the group process.

Remember to give group members the opportunity to respond if they wish, or to come back to you at a later stage, either within or outside the group setting.

Feedback must always be appropriate in terms of both what the facilitator says and when they says it. For example:

• A young person with low self-esteem who is very aware of her / his position within her / his peer group, may find it difficult to receive public affirmation, so it may be more appropriate to give it on a one-to-one basis after the group session. Otherwise, rather than encouraging greater participation and learning, these may actually be inhibited.

• Yelling at a child or young person about her / his negative behaviour does not constitute appropriate feedback and breaks all the rules of the contract that the facilitator is trying to model to the group!

ENABLING APPROPRIATE ENDINGS

All group processes must come to an end at some point. Although group members and the facilitator may meet in other contexts and for other purposes, the particular process in which they were involved will be completed. Even where a teacher continues to work with the same class or a principal continues to work with her / his staff team, the series of lessons or development sessions need to have a clear finishing point. This does not mean that particular themes or concerns cannot be revised or explored further at a later date, but this should be seen as a separate stage of the process, and may not involve the same group of individuals.

Appropriate endings provide a sense of closure and contribute to the group's sense of working in a safe space with clear boundaries. Endings are also important because they are part of the learning experience. A clear ending:

• prevents the process from becoming too drawn out, or even boring;

• provides a specific opportunity for reflecting back on the process and assessing the learning which has taken place;

• creates a space for celebrating what has been learnt and the value of the relationships and process which the group has experienced;

• gives the group members the opportunity to think about how they are going to use their learning in school and in their broader life experience;

• allows group members to consider what further learning might be useful to them.

For further information on 'endings' see The Importance of Closure (Section Five) and Developing a Model for Self-evaluation (Section Six).

3.8
Useful Tips for Facilitating Discussions

Outlined below are strategies to assist effective discussion. Consider how these could be replaced (when need be) with, picture or colour cards, one word responses, thumbs up / down, other actions, puppets, etc., particularly when working with younger children.

Ways of Starting

Sometimes it is good to get everyone involved by asking them for a quick contribution. You might set the 'ball rolling' by asking each person for a one word reaction to the theme, to say, briefly, how the issue relates to them or by telling a personal anecdote that is sparked off by the subject. Alternatively, each individual could complete one of these unfinished sentences:

- *I am excited about this discussion because ...*
- *I am not sure about this discussion because ...*
- *Right now I feel ...*

NB. Consider using humour sometimes as a way of introducing controversial issues. It can be a great way of 'hooking' people's enthusiasm and good will and releasing facilitator and group member anxieties prior to a deeper level of investigation.

Questions for Reflection

What are the things I can do to create a positive and democratic learning environment for those I work with?

What practical things can I do to create a warm welcome at the start and throughout the module / programme?

Have I taken time to write down the purpose of this programme? Is it clear, relevant and easy to understand? Check it out with someone!

What skills will group members need for this programme? Have I built in sufficient time and activities to support them in developing these?

What can I do to encourage appropriate personal sharing within the group?

What might it be appropriate for me to share from my own experiences?

What opportunities have I built in to give and to receive feedback?

Have I ensured that the different aspects of ending the programme can be attended to?

77

Ways of Ending

Stopping a discussion can be as hard as starting one! Marking the end in some way often helps. Ask a member of the group to sum up what has been said, gather some key words / points of learning on a flipchart, or try using these unfinished sentences:

- *By participating in this discussion I have gained . . .*
- *New things I have learnt by participating in this discussion include . . .*
- *After participating in this discussion I will do things differently because . . .*
- *Something I have enjoyed about participating in this discussion is . . .*

Effective Discussions

Sometimes a discussion can become sidetracked, people can get bogged down in a particular issue, energy levels can plummet, something can happen to distract people, etc. There are a number of quick interventions that may help. (At other times, a more significant intervention may be needed, or people may simply need some 'time out'.)

Just Checking
Everyone can be asked to say a few words about how they are feeling at that moment, for example, bored, interested, tired, etc. Alternatively, the facilitator can call out suggestions and individuals can stand up if the word matches how they are feeling. This can be useful if the group seems to be breaking up for no clear reason.

Optimists
If a discussion is becoming negative, or the group is becoming irritable and mistrustful, ask everyone to make one positive statement before they criticise an idea. They may need a structure to do this, for example, 'One good thing about that is . . . I also feel that . . . '

Sides
If discussion is becoming polarised, people should be asked to put forward the opposite viewpoint to their own position or to state their own view, then put forward an opposing case. Alternatively, they could be asked to repeat what they heard the other person say and check this out with the speaker. Indeed you may need to be prepared to do something similar yourself or to play 'devil's advocate'. This can be useful in getting people to consider the others' case and lead to a better acceptance of the others' views.

Turns
To help make discussions less rowdy, to encourage listening as well as talking, to support individuals to think before they speak, a number of techniques can be used:

- put a ball on a table or in the middle of the group. If anyone wants to talk, s/he must take the ball from the table or the middle and return it (always to the table / middle, not to another group member) when s/he has finished.

- give three playing cards to each participant, once s/he uses these, s/he is not allowed to speak again.

Stuck Discussions

Sometimes, discussions just seem to get 'stuck'. No one has anything to say and there is an uneasy, anxious atmosphere. Usually when a discussion is really stuck, something has happened to make people feel very anxious. They are afraid of talking. All their energy is bound up in worrying and they find it hard to speak. This often happens if you have approached an emotional subject too soon, before enough trust has developed in the group. Leave emotional subjects until people know each other better. If it does happen, however, (and sometimes it does quite unexpectedly) try:

- *going back to less threatening topics;*
- *working in pairs or smaller groups;*
- *saying what you think is wrong – talking about the problem can make it less frightening and you can start to rebuild trust.*

Sometimes discussions get stuck because people have genuinely contributed all their ideas. When this happens, even if it is sooner than you anticipated, you need to close the discussion (possibly with one of the suggestions above) and move on. It may be useful for the group to come back to the theme at a later stage when they have had more time to think about it or have learnt more about it through other activities.

Questions for Reflection

Have I thought about how I am going to start and finish the discussions within this session?

Have I a few quick strategies 'up my sleeve' so I can feel confident to respond to situations such as those outlined above?

Considering this session's theme and the group involved, are there any potential difficulties that I may need to watch out for?

What are my fears about this session's potential discussion themes?

Will I be able to be flexible if I need to alter my session plan?

Have I a couple of activities in my head if we finish the planned work early?

79

3.9
Responding to Behaviour which is 'Challenging'

The starting point for any facilitator in responding to challenging behaviour within a group is to be aware of their own attitudes, actions and reactions within the group process as a whole and within a specific situation.

When we think about challenging behaviour, we often imagine behaviour which is noisily disruptive, aggressive or confrontational. This may 'tap into' our anxieties about a lack of skill or training / support in ways of positively responding to verbal or physical conflict. There may be, however, many other behaviours which we find challenging, and it is important to be aware of which behaviours have an emotional impact on us and which raise anxieties about our ability to deal with or resolve them. Some challenging behaviours within a groupwork setting can include:

- *shyness and linked withdrawal;*
- *disengagement, possibly due to boredom, a sense of irrelevance, etc.;*
- *joking about and a refusal to engage with serious themes;*
- *other diversionary tactics;*
- *cliques, and refusals to work as a group.*

When you are striving to create an inclusive, participative atmosphere, the challenge may be how to ensure that people are genuinely included and able to contribute and learn.

Finding out What's Wrong:

- Don't assume that because you can see a particular behaviour that you know the reasons behind it.

- Jumping to the wrong conclusions may mean that you make the wrong response.

- The priority must always be ensuring the physical and emotional safety of the group.

- Once this is established, take time to check out what is going on with group members.

- This discussion in itself may be enough to resolve the difficulty, otherwise it will allow you to make an informed decision about the next step.

There are many resources which provide helpful insights into positive behaviour management both generally and in a specific groupwork based context. Some of these are listed in the resources section at the back of this pack. Below are some aspects to consider and some specific strategies which may be useful.

80

Thinking about Ourselves First

There can be a tendency to associate challenging behaviours with children and young people, but adults are equally likely to display any of the behaviours previously listed. Given this, it is important to be aware of your own behaviour as a group member, and the things that you might do which will create difficulties for the facilitator and, potentially, inhibit the group as a whole.

A humorous list of examples (How to 'Wind-up' the Facilitator), but with a serious point, is outlined below. It is worth thinking about how these or similar things irritate you when you are facilitating, teaching or chairing a meeting, for at least two reasons:

- it helps you to be aware of the potential impact of your behaviour on the facilitator;

- it helps you to be aware of behaviour which particularly triggers negative reactions within you when you are facilitating. This can help you to develop some coping strategies and constructive responses in advance, rather than reacting out of irritation or frustration.

Think also about any distinctions you might make in the way that you approach a situation involving adults and one involving children or young people. Sometimes these distinctions will be appropriate, because of the age groups involved and their levels of understanding, personal development, etc. Although working with peers may involve different dynamics, we must respond to children and young people with the same respect which we give to adults.

Sometimes it is tempting to let adults away with behaviour not perceived as acceptable if the group members were children or young people. Often this is the case because we find responding to the behaviour of adults, particularly our peers, more challenging, and some additional support (for example, within a supervision context) may be needed.

HOW TO 'WIND-UP' THE FACILITATOR

1 Always arrive late and make a lot of noise finding a seat.

2 When talking, use 20 words when five would do.

3 Set your watch alarm to go off regularly.

4 During discussion yawn and sigh deeply.

5 Pass notes to others.

6 When the facilitator introduces an exercise, just say that you have done it before and you know that it does not work.

7 Always come in late after lunch and fall asleep - alternatively, do not bother to turn up for the afternoon session.

8 Organise for friends to call you on your mobile phone during the session, and send text messages to those that do not.

9 When asked if there are any questions, ask how long it is until break / lunch.

10 During discussions, talk behind your hand to the person next to you.

11 When in small groups to do an exercise, spend the time talking about your last holiday or what you're planning to do at the weekend.

12 Break the ground rule about speaking for yourself. Make many sweeping generalisations, which suggest that the whole group shares your view that the session is pointless.

13 Do not say a word during the evaluation, then go around afterwards being very critical.

14 At the end, do not pick up your handouts and take them with you. Ideally, leave them scattered on the floor. [12]

---

12 Adapted from Skinner, S. (1992), Training and How Not to Panic, Halifax, Community Development Training Unit.

81

A Context for Responding to Challenging Behaviour

The starting point to responding to challenging behaviour is to consider whether you, as the facilitator, have done your best to create and maintain a safe learning space. This would include the following:

CLARITY OF GROUP / PROGRAMME PURPOSE

•   Have you clearly explained the purpose of the group being together and the specific programme?

•   What evidence do you have that group members have understood this and perceive its relevance to them?

•   Are you restating the purpose, flagging up any changes / developments and checking this out with group members at appropriate stages throughout the process / programme?

A SAFE SPACE FOR LEARNING

•   Have you taken sufficient time in the early stages of the programme to:

•   *get to know group members' names?*
•   *build trusting and respectful relationships between yourself and the group, and between group members?*
•   *work with the group in establishing a clear contract for working together?*
•   *enable the group members to develop the skills they will need in order to participate fully in the process / programme?*

•   Are you taking time to revisit these aspects of group building at appropriate stages throughout the process / programme?

PROGRAMME PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

•   Have you made yourself aware of any appropriate information you need with regard to aspects of group members' life (and, specifically, school) experience which may impact on the way in which they participate in this particular group and programme?

•   Have you included a broad enough range of learning experiences to cater for the different learning styles and interests of group members?

•   Is there coherence between individual sessions / activities and the overall programme purpose?

•   What evidence is there that group members are able to see the purpose and relevance of individual sessions and activities to:

•   *the programme as a whole?*
•   *themselves as individuals?*

•   Is there flexibility in the programme to respond to group members' learning needs and interests?

•   Have group members been able to share in programme planning, evaluation and further development?

82

Developing Responses to Specific Behaviours

The ways of working suggested previously may seem time-consuming within the pressures of a classroom or other timetable, however, if you are encountering 'challenging' behaviours, it is likely that time is not being spent usefully anyway, and that learning and enjoyment are being restricted.

In order that learning and enjoyment can be re-established the issues and behaviour need to be dealt with and this process, if facilitated well, will involve learning in itself. Sometimes this means having the courage to abandon your original programme, at least temporarily!

Below are some examples of behaviour which will need a response, and some suggestions as to what this process might involve in terms of underlying principles. The list is far from exhaustive, and there are no set answers: different settings, groups and programmes will need different responses. There are also scenarios at the end of the section which you can use to consider your own underlying values and strategies. In each case, the starting point for responding is a respectful and inclusive setting.

A GROUND RULE IS BROKEN

If this happens, it is important that the response is prompt and appropriately visible to the whole group: they need to know that the contract is meaningful, and that they have a responsibility to keep it themselves and to support the rest of the group members in keeping it. Equally, they need to know that there are consequences if a ground rule is broken. Having involved all group members in drawing up the contract, they also need to be involved, where possible, in deciding what happens if a ground rule is broken. See Developing a Contract / Learning Agreement (Section Five).

CONFLICT WITHIN THE GROUP

Conflict can take many forms within the group. A ***restorative approach*** to behavioural issues[13] would argue that negative behaviours are not simply about broken rules but are, more significantly, about the breakdown of relationships which require restoration. Any response will need to address the feelings and attitudes of both 'perpetrators' and 'victims' – it is likely that both or all of those involved may perceive themselves as victims in some way, or may perceive themselves as both at different points in the process. In the example above, if an individual group member breaks a ground rule, the relationships between her / him and the other group members, and between her / him and you are broken. As the facilitator, you are likely to need to take on a mediation role or to involve another facilitator. Depending on the incident and on the group itself, this could be another group member. Some guidance on dealing with conflict situations, including mediation, is provided in Managing Conflict (Section Four).

LACK OF PARTICIPATION

An apparent lack of, or a withdrawal from participation by individual group members can be for all kinds of reasons: shyness, a preference for observation, boredom, no sense of relevance or meaningfulness, distractions, a more pressing priority to think about, etc. Each of these will require a different response, and you are unlikely to know what the cause is unless you check it out with the group or the particular individual concerned. When it does involve one person, it will often be more appropriate to address it with her / him individually. If the cause is shyness or anxiety, for example, picking her / him out within the group is likely to make matters worse.

13 See, for example, Belinda Hopkins, www.transformingconflict.org

83

DISRUPTIVE BEHAVIOUR

All kinds of behaviours can be disruptive, whether it is apparently harmless joking, everyone talking at once and not listening to you or to each other, or numerous other examples. Again, there may be a wide range of reasons for the behaviour, and you will probably need to check out the possible causes in order to deal with it effectively. Is it:

- *boredom;*
- *anxiety about discussing a particular theme;*
- *absence of a sense of connection or relevance;*
- *excitement about other things;*
- *not being challenged or stimulated enough;*
- *finding it too challenging or difficult;*
- *an issue or conflict from outside that has been brought into the group;*
- *the time of year?*

You may need to use some 'containing' strategies in order to create the space for exploring causes and potential responses. Depending on the circumstances, these could include:

- a change of activity – possibly to something more active to enable people to 'let off steam' (see Section Five (Using Games)) or, alternatively, to something calming, perhaps a few moments silence;

- a change of venue – to somewhere where there will be less disruptions or distractions, or with different associations;

- a change of theme – back to a 'safer' theme, until there is greater trust and skill within the group to enable them to explore the one which you had originally planned;

- a five / ten minute break;

- using the break to have a quick one-to-one chat with particular individuals, if need be;

- using 'warning cards' or quietly letting people know that you are unhappy with their behaviour and why, so that any further action is part of a process and is not unexpected or misunderstood;

- 'time out' from the group for an individual member (this needs to be managed appropriately, and be for a set length of time);

- going around the circle and asking everyone for one word to describe how they are feeling at that moment – this will give you a starting point for responding and / or opening a discussion.

Where the whole group seems to be affected, and you are fairly sure of the cause, suggesting this openly to the group and giving them the opportunity to respond and to talk about it, may in itself partly resolve the problem. It may at least give you back their attention, because (if you have got it right!), you are now working with them on something that is relevant, set by their needs and at their level. If you have got it wrong, inviting their input and analysis may in itself be enough to re-engage them with the process. When you are not sure, asking an open question to check out your assumptions may also provide a way in, for example:

- 'It seems to me that some people are feeling a bit unsettled today. Would anyone like to tell me how you are actually feeling?'

- 'What do you think of these activities that we're doing today? Why is that?'

Always try to include those who seem to be less directly affected, or who may have gone quiet as others became more disruptive: they may feel that it is nothing to do with them, or they may feel frustrated by the disruption to the session, etc. These individuals may also be more able to see a creative way out of the difficulty.

84

754

☑

Summary Points:

- Start by creating and maintaining an inclusive and safe setting.

- Model the behaviour you expect from group members.

- Affirm and give attention to positive behaviour, rather than focusing on negative behaviour.

- Check out your assumptions: do not assume you know the cause of the behaviour you see.

- Confirm the physical and emotional safety of the group before going on to address the behaviour more fully.

- Consider how the whole group has been affected, not just those most obviously involved.

- Be flexible with your programme – keep reviewing it to ensure relevance, stimulation and enjoyment.

- Take time to resolve situations thoroughly, if possible: it will be worth it in the long run.

NB. It is possible that you will encounter children and young people whose behaviour is consistently challenging and who need additional support. This can be stressful and exhausting for the teacher(s) working with the child or young person on a daily basis, and they also need support, as may the other pupils who participate daily in classes with them. Here, perhaps more than anywhere else, the importance of a supportive staff team comes into play, as does awareness and availability of external resources, for example, through the ELB or other agencies. One source for suggestions on strategies for working with children and young people 'beyond' is Jenny Mosley's Circle Time Model as outlined in her various books.[14]

Responding to Behaviour which is 'Challenging'

Outlined below are a number of scenarios, based on real life examples, for you to consider how the theory of responding to behaviour which is 'challenging' might translate into everyday practice. Drawing on the ideas within Section Three (Responding to Behaviour which is 'Challenging') and elsewhere in the resource, how might you respond to the situations outlined below?

Alternatively, or additionally, consider examples from your own experience – reflecting on them now, what might you do the same and what might you do differently?

[14] See, for example, Mosley, J. (2000), Quality Circle Time in the Primary Classroom, Wisbech, LDA.

85

755

Responding to Behaviour which is 'Challenging'

1   You are facilitating a session exploring a contentious issue. (This could be anything from a playground conflict, to a political or ethical issue, to a change that is proposed for the school's decision-making structures, etc.). One person in the group seems to have particularly strong views on the subject and is dominating the discussion to the extent that the majority of group members have not spoken.

How do you respond?

2   There is a lively discussion taking place within the group, but one person has not contributed at all in this or the previous session. When you used sentence completion around the circle, s/he chose to pass. You are not sure of the reasons for her / his lack of participation, but you are concerned that s/he may not be learning from or enjoying the sessions, and, equally, no one else is benefiting from any contribution this person might be able to make.

How do you respond?

3   You are feeling frustrated because every time you try to take the group's work and discussion to a deeper level, one group member with apparent influence over others keeps joking, introducing 'red herrings' and generally pulling the conversation back to a superficial level.

How do you respond?

4   You are exploring flags and symbols with a group. After significant preparation, you decide to introduce actual flags as part of a discussion exercise. The behaviour of a small number of group members becomes aggressively disruptive, preventing both them and all other group members from engaging with the exercise.

How do you respond?

757
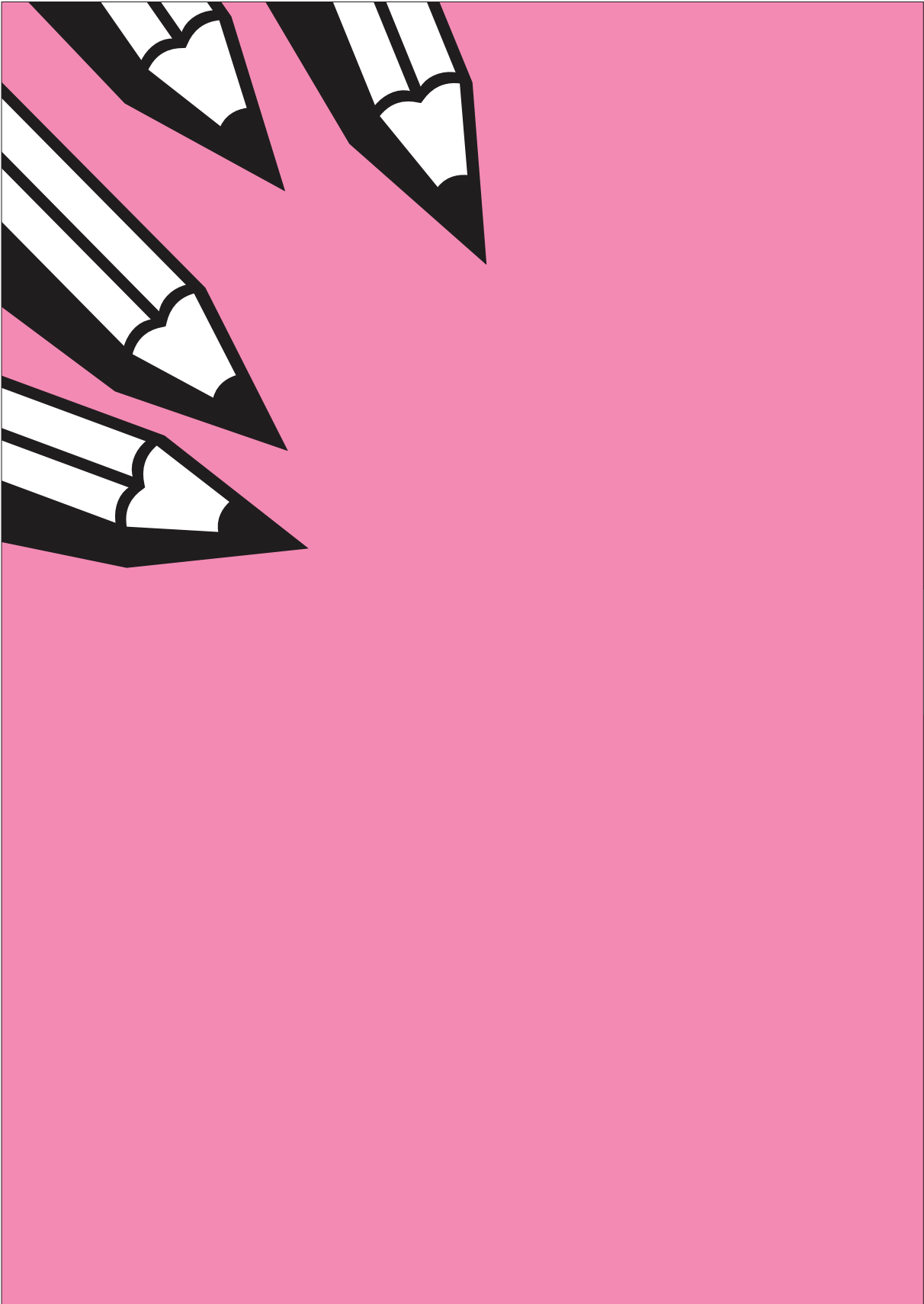
Exploring Controversial Issues

'... all learning begins when our comfortable ideas are found

to be inadequate ... the diversity of ideas that comes from

the diversity of people is one of the best ways to create this

necessary condition of learning.'

CAMBRON-MCCABE, N. AND QUANTZ, R., 'GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR PREPARING TRANSFORMATIVE EDUCATIONAL LEADERS' IN SENGE, P. ET AL. (2000), SCHOOLS THAT LEARN, LONDON, NICHOLAS BREALEY PUBLISHING.

exploring controversial issues

4.0

What is a Controversial Issue?

A controversial issue is 'an issue about which there is no one fixed or universally held point of view. Such issues are those which commonly divide society and for which significant groups offer conflicting explanations and solutions'.[1]

By their very nature, controversial issues can involve strong feelings as well as different perspectives and viewpoints. Each person will approach them from her / his own value base and life experiences.

Intentional and Responsive Work

In considering this area of work within schools and other educational settings, it is important to recognise that opportunities to explore controversial issues do not only come about because they have been planned into a scheme of work or a staff training session. Often, they may arise as a result of an external event (in the media or the local community, for example) or as a consequence of an incident of prejudice, discrimination or bullying (whether general, or of a sectarian or racist nature) within the school itself. In these cases, an immediate response may be required, and / or it may be appropriate to build the issue into future lesson plans and meeting schedules. This means that everyone involved in the school can contribute to learning and may find themselves in a position to respond in particular situations, for example, the playground, the canteen, off-site activities, etc. This kind of responsive work may be very different in its starting points from the intentional work of planned lessons, modules and training programmes, but the underlying ethos and processes will be essentially the same. If a class regularly uses Circle Time, for example, to explore classroom issues, or a staff team regularly uses a groupwork format to reflect on school successes, issues and concerns, the fora for responsive work are already in place. Time taken to create a whole school approach, to build positive relationships, to develop skills and to familiarise adults and pupils with these ways of working will be well spent, and, in fact, crucial in providing a framework for the exploration of more controversial issues however and whenever they arise.

1 Advisory Group on Citizenship (1998), Education for Citizenship and the Teaching of Democracy in School, London, QCA.

89

Why do Children, Young People and Adults need opportunities to explore Controversial Issues?

'Stories are the secret reservoirs of values: change the stories individuals and nations live by and tell themselves and you change the individuals and nations. Nations and people are largely the stories they feed themselves. If they tell themselves stories that are lies, they will suffer the future consequences of those lies. If they tell themselves stories that face their own truths, they will free their history for future flowerings.' [2]

• Children and young people's experience of learning in school needs to be relevant to their broader life experience and the opportunities and decisions which they face personally, socially and vocationally.

• Exploration of controversial issues opens up many opportunities for personal development and learning.

• Avoidance or denial of difficult issues can leave a significant gap in their educational experience.

• Controversial issues often have a strong 'feelings' dimension. Giving children and young people the opportunity to articulate and explore these feelings is an important aspect of developing emotional literacy.

• Exploring controversial issues involves the development of a whole range of skills including active participation and listening, critical and creative thinking, investigative and reasoning skills, decision-making, empathy, finding positive ways of approaching diversity and conflict, etc.

• An indication that a school is a genuinely 'safe place' for everyone in the school community and for those who visit, will be the extent to which children, young people and adults are able to openly and respectfully discuss controversial issues.

• Perhaps most importantly, research indicates that children and young people are interested in these kinds of issues and want opportunities to explore them.

• These experiences and learning are also important for adults so that when they have the opportunity to explore them with children and young people, they can do so with:

• *a personal awareness of the everyday nature of such issues;*

• *confidence in their own ability to participate in and / or facilitate such discussions;*

• *a recognition of the learning they can gain from children, young people and their peers.*

Questions for Reflection

What are some of the issues that I would define as controversial?

Do I see it as part of the role and responsibility of schools to explore issues such as these with children, young people and adults within the school community?

What do I personally perceive as some of the potential benefits of such exploration:
• *for myself;*
• *for children and young people;*
• *for the adults in the school community?*

What do I perceive as some of the potential difficulties?

Can I see possibilities for creating opportunities for this kind of exploration within my own work and sphere of influence? Where?

2 Okri, B. (1996), Birds of Heaven, London, Phoenix.

90

4.1
Diversity Dictionary [3]

Prejudice

Unfavourable opinion or feeling formed beforehand without knowledge, thought or reason. Feelings or attitudes (positive or negative) towards individuals or groups and based on prior assumptions.

An untested or inherited assumption or belief

Stereotype

Tendency to think or act in rigid, repetitive and often meaningless patterns. A standardised image or perception shared by all members of a social group. Most of our stereotypes tend to be negative, because of this some people prefer to substitute it for the less emotive or value-loaded term 'generalisation'.

Applying fixed notions to people

Discrimination

Unfair treatment of a person, racial group, minority, etc; action based on prejudice. It is important to see discrimination as prejudice in action, since it is based on the creation of unfavourable distinctions between one group or people and another, often because of characteristics such as race, colour, sex and intelligence.

Discrimination can be positive but is usually negative.

Race / Racism

Group of persons sharing a genetic pool. Disputed term as cannot really be shown to exist. Racism occurs when discriminatory action is taken on the basis of a person's or group's perceived ethnic origin.

Sectarianism [4]

A system of attitudes, actions, beliefs and structures:

- *at personal, communal and institutional levels;*
- *which always involves religion, and typically involves a negative mixing of religion and politics;*

which arises as a distorted expression of positive, human needs especially for belonging, identity and the free expression of difference; and is expressed in destructive patterns of relating to:

- *hardening the boundaries between groups;*
- *overlooking others;*
- *belittling, dehumanising or demonising others;*
- *justifying or collaborating in domination of others;*
- *physical or verbal intimidating or attacking others.*

3 Adapted from an NUS / USI Training Document.

4 Adapted from Liechty, J. and Clegg, C. (2001), Moving beyond Sectarianism: Religion, Conflict and Reconciliation in Northern Ireland, Dublin, Columba Press.

91

4.1
Acknowledging Fears and Concerns

There are people who for different reasons, may feel very positive about the opportunity to explore more controversial or challenging issues. Others may have significant anxieties based around the very term 'controversial issues'. Even for those who do feel positive, there may be concerns about the risks that might be required, and fears that other people will not bring the same degree of openness to the group.

of such conversations and do not know what to expect. They may fear that a 'can of worms' may be opened, rather than feeling positive about things they might learn or the opportunity to hear other people's perspectives.

•   Fears and concerns may be caused or heightened by events and relationships within the local community and / or by wider societal and political developments.

Why do we feel Anxious or Afraid?

When thinking about exploring themes which may be controversial it is important to bear in mind that:

•   Fears and concerns are genuinely felt, even if you, as the facilitator, do not share them. Equally, there may be very strong reasons why people feel this way and these may emerge in discussion.

•   Fears and concerns are likely to be strongest among a group that does not know each other well and where the levels of trust are low.

•   They may be shaped by previous negative experiences, or by stories they have heard from others.

•   The tendency to raise subjects such as politics, religion, etc. only with those from the same background and perspective can deepen fears about conversing on these issues with those from different backgrounds.

•   A culture of 'polite avoidance' of themes such as politics and religion may mean that people simply do not have much experience

Fears and Concerns that might be Experienced?

Below are listed some examples of fears and concerns that were expressed or demonstrated in various ways by group participants exploring themes of identity and sectarianism in Northern Ireland. Remember, these are only examples and the list is not exhaustive!

•   *not being listened to or respected*

•   *being laughed at, mocked or embarrassed*

•   *being misunderstood*

•   *giving offence*

•   *harming (new) friendships*

•   *being 'forced' to talk about difficult / sensitive / personal issues*

•   *isolation or being a 'lone voice'*

•   *'letting the side down' or breaking the united front presented by the rest of the group or sub-group*

•   *being shown up as ignorant of their own or others' traditions*

•   *issues being talked about outside the session or group*

•   *verbal or physical attack, either during the session or afterwards*

Fears and Concerns that might be Experienced by the Facilitator?

You may share some of the fears and concerns that group members feel, and it is important to explore these as part of your personal preparation. You may also have concerns about how you facilitate this work, and whether you have sufficient support within your school or organisation.

This issue is explored more fully in Personal Preparation for Facilitation (Section Three).

Thorough preparation and finding ways to create a safe space are of paramount importance to allay fears of both participants and the facilitator, ensuring that the risk-taking involved is appropriate and adequately supported. The most effective overall structure is one which is based on a whole school approach where the commitment to, and responsibility for, this way of working is shared by everyone in the school community.

Responding to the Unexpected

Sometimes themes may arise within a session which you as the facilitator did not think would be controversial or emotive but which spark off strong feelings within the group.

Some of the group members may be as surprised by this as you are. If you feel personally well prepared and have put the structures in place which create a safe space for your groupwork, you will already have the tools which you need to facilitate the new development within the group process. Again, this may be a time when you have to significantly change, or even abandon, your original programme.

Questions for Reflection

Do some of the fears and concerns listed above resonate for me?

Where can I get some support in addressing these?

Am I aware of any of these fears and concerns being particularly relevant for the group in relation to the themes we will be exploring together?

What are some of the things I may need to do with the group to address these?

Having worked with group members to address their fears and concerns, what are likely to be some of the positive outcomes for them from exploring these particular themes?

93

763

4.2
Working with Emotions

Working with controversial issues involves facilitators in being willing to:

• pay attention to their own feelings and values around sensitive / controversial issues;

• see their own personal development as an integral part of their professional development;

• understand that their growth in confidence and competence will be a continual process – 'lifelong learning';

• take account of other relevant programmes both within and outside of school, and support group members in making connections in their learning;

• work towards creating an open and democratic classroom using negotiated ground rules to promote a safe, enjoyable environment conducive to enquiry and learning.

Working with controversial issues involves group members in being willing to:

• recognise and take responsibility for their feelings as opposed to avoiding or denying them through blaming or accusing someone else for making them feel bad;

• pay attention to how they each experience feelings in their bodies and the language that they use to communicate how they are feeling;

• look for and, when appropriate, challenge patterns which connect their feelings and their behaviour;

• operate the ground rules and act in ways that promote fairness and democracy.

All of this needs to be grounded in a framework of positive relationships which is sustained throughout the process. See Building Positive Relationships (Section Three) and Creating Safe Space (Section Five).

What Feelings are likely to be Generated around Controversial Issues?

Possibilities might include:

Anger
Expressions of hatred; stereotyping, insulting, denigrating, blaming, accusing the other person / 'side', wish for revenge / retribution.

Pride
in individual / collective identity, culture, a particular cause, place, event, etc.

Hurt
feelings of being ignored / neglected; not having a chance to tell their side of the story; experience of being a victim of conflict.

Kinship / loyalty
towards an individual, group, party, etc.

Guilt and shame
feeling responsible, dishonourable, unworthy; feeling of 'letting the side down'.

Sadness
sense of loss, grief, disillusionment, hopelessness, despair.

Triumph
sense of achievement, victory (possibly at the expense of another person / group).

How Might they be Manifested?

There are many models for understanding behaviour but a very generalised summary of them could suggest that our emotions can be experienced in three ways. We may, of course, display our feelings in more than one way at the same time. These are through:

1 bodily feelings, for example, 'butterflies in the tummy' i.e. 'feeling' the feelings;

2 physical behaviour including body language i.e. 'acting' out the feelings through gesture, posture, behaviour, non-verbal communication;

3 verbalising i.e. naming and 'talking' about the feelings.

Why do Some People Seem to Act out their Feelings more than Others?

We all have varying levels of self-awareness about how our emotions can affect our behaviour. Our self-awareness can also fluctuate depending on how we are feeling on any given day and on the degree of the emotion aroused by the issue. Strong feelings will usually indicate a high degree of personal involvement with the issue – currently or in past experience.

Are Feelings Always What they Seem to Be?

Instead of demonstrating what we are actually feeling in one or more of the three ways suggested, another option is to mask or translate the feeling into a form that is somehow less frightening or more acceptable (in our perception) either to ourselves or to another, for example, the facilitator. Many of us resort to using **defence mechanisms** when we are feeling threatened in any way. Common defence mechanisms include:

Resisting or Denial
refusing to accept that there is any emotional reaction, despite evidence to the contrary, for example, 'I'm not angry!!!'

Sublimating
channelling anger towards a safe target as opposed to dealing with the root cause.

Avoidance
disengaging from the session; causing disruption to divert attention away from source of unease; displaying boredom; giggling; 'This is stupid' etc.

Compliance
where a group member appears to be engaging but actually is not.

Minimising
feelings, perhaps by taking refuge in clichés such as, 'It was OK / not too bad', 'I'm alright / fine', etc.

Are Defence Mechanisms Unhelpful when Looking at Controversial Issues?

Defence mechanisms are there for very good reasons: they are forms of learned behaviour that in our past experiences have proved helpful in dealing with threatening situations. As such, they are to be respected and worked with gently. When dealing with controversial issues the aim is to provide enough safety to be able to explore the issue that has set off the defence mechanism in the first place, but at a level and a pace that the person can handle. Too confrontational an approach can cause the person to become more defensive, leaving little opportunity for learning.

95

What Can be Done if Someone does Become Very Emotional?

SUMMARISE

When working with controversial issues, periodically summarise what seems to be happening and reflect this back to the group, for example, 'I can see that when I say that there seems to be a variety of reactions. Some of you look a bit annoyed, some of you seem OK.'

In this way, if someone does become very emotional, it will not come as a huge shock to the group. This also creates partnership between the facilitator and the group around the pace and the intensity of the learning processes.

LET GROUP MEMBERS SET THE PACE

The facilitator will need to 'feel her / his way' as to how far and how deep to go within the given time. This also means checking out the group's readiness, perhaps through tentative questions, such as 'Would it be OK to talk about ...,' and making adjustments guided by group responses, such as ' Maybe we could skip on to looking at people's attitudes towards...'.

ACKNOWLEDGE WHAT'S HAPPENING IN THE GROUP

If feelings do become strongly engaged do not ignore them or pretend that nothing is happening. If you do, the individual and the group as a whole will loose confidence in your honesty. They do not necessarily expect you to 'fix things' but they will need you to acknowledge something is happening and to work with them in dealing with it.

RESPECT FEELINGS

Do not minimise anyone's reaction otherwise they may feel humiliated, ashamed or exposed. Reflect the person's feelings to them and the group, and offer them a choice: 'Is this something you want to talk about now or would it be better to take some other time to do it?'.

If someone is personally aggrieved over something that has arisen out of the group's work provide an opportunity for them to speak, listen, reflect, summarise and acknowledge the level of feeling. This does not mean condoning or rejecting the validity of the feeling. That can be a matter for more discussion once feelings around the issue have been discharged.

If someone in the group feels tearful, it is important to acknowledge this and to reassure her / him and the group that tears are OK. It may be appropriate to offer her / him some 'time out', to talk with her /him individually after the session, or support her / him to stay within the group.

Do encourage everyone as individuals to take responsibility for their own feelings. When taking part in discussions ask everyone to use 'I' statements as opposed to 'We' / 'You'. If necessary, interrupt speakers politely to remind them to do this. Model this yourself as the facilitator.

Allow people to respond to each other's feelings without intervening to 'protect' them unless this becomes necessary. Where appropriate, keep reminding them of the contract – the importance of respect, etc.

96

NO-BLAME

- Do not make the group feel guilty that feelings are running high; instead encourage them to consider the meaning of such strong feelings and what can be learned from them.

- Do not scapegoat individuals; keep the emphasis on 'us as a group'.

- Try to provide a safe and respectful way for people to express their feelings, for example, through offering a structure: 'When you say ..., I feel ...', etc.

- Be 'up front' (in relationship terms, aim for transparency) about what is happening: 'It's obvious that X and Z are very annoyed by this and we need to sort this out before moving on,' and involve the group actively in creating some sort of resolution.

- Do not force people to take more risks than they are ready for – but, equally, do not limit the group inappropriately by your own fears.

WHEN IT ALL SEEMS TO GO WRONG

Try not to feel that because the session has not 'gone to plan' that it has been a disaster. It can seem unhelpful and contrived to steer discussion too closely. Wherever the group and discussion have ended up will have involved useful learning. Turn the situation into an opportunity for evaluation and learning. See If Things 'Go Wrong' (Section Five).

Questions for Reflection

What are my anxieties around facilitating work which may raise strong emotions?

What can I do to minimise these anxieties without limiting the work itself?

Am I aware of similar or other anxieties within the group?

How can I best support group members?

Have I strategies in place if someone does become very emotional?

97

4.3.
Managing Conflict

The Chinese word for 'conflict' is made up of two characters.

One character implies that conflict can be a crisis, while the other indicates that it can be an opportunity. Often we focus on the crisis and miss the opportunity to see the positive aspect about conflict.

The reality is that conflict is all pervasive in our lives. It appears in our personal life, exists in our communities and is present in schools.

STARTING POINTS:

1   Conflict is a natural part of everyday life.

2   Conflict in itself is neutral, however, if not handled appropriately conflict can become very destructive; it can also bring about learning, growth and change.

3   Each of us can develop skills to handle conflict creatively.

Conflict is constructive when it:
- *brings about meaningful communication;*
- *addresses the issues;*
- *releases built up emotions or anxiety.*

Conflict is destructive when it:
- *causes aggressive or violent behaviour;*
- *hardens attitudes;*
- *lowers self-confidence, self-esteem or security;*
- *prevents real issues from being addressed.*

Types of conflict can focus on the following themes:

Interests
What 'I' want
What 'you' want

Understanding
What 'I' understand
What 'you' understand

Values
What is important to 'me'
What is important to 'you'

Styles
How do 'I' deal with issues
How do 'you' deal with issues

Opinions
What 'I' think
What 'you' think

Questions for Reflection

What do you understand conflict to be?

Describe a positive / negative experience of conflict?

Was it resolved?

What were your feelings at the time, and now?

98

768

Can we Simplify Conflict and Focus on how it is Made Up? [5]

Behaviour
Often, the first experience of conflict is behaviour (shouting, fighting, withdrawing etc.).

Feelings
Behind the behaviour there is normally a feeling (anger, frustration, hurt, powerlessness etc.). We need to ask, 'What is the person feeling?'

Issues
Behind the feelings there are normally issues or experiences. We need to ask, 'Why are they feeling that way?'

Relationships
In conflicts, issues usually involve another party or relationship. We need to ask, 'Who else is involved?'

Personal Task
Using this structure, describe a conflict with which you are familiar.

Conflict Management Styles [6]

Five main ways to manage conflict:

1 Avoid
The individual withdraws from the conflict. S/he believes it is hopeless to try and resolve conflict and avoid people and issues that may cause it.

2 Accommodate
These are co-operative individuals who tend to quickly accept the position of others and ignore their own needs. They are very concerned about keeping relationships together and fear conflict will damage relationships.

3 Compete
Those who adopt this style try to force others to accept their positions and deny the feelings and needs of others. They believe in 'win-lose' scenarios.

4 Compromise
This style is characterised by a 'give and take' approach to conflict resolution. Compromising is a middle ground, which addresses issues to some depth and leaves people partially satisfied.

5 Collaborate
These individuals confront conflict openly and fairly. They have a high regard for other interests and for preserving relationships.

Questions for Reflection

What strategy do you think you adopt most often?

Is this different in your personal life to how you manage conflict in the classroom / with colleagues / with other adults in the school community?

Does your strategy change depending on the situation?

What other factors influence how you deal with conflict?

How does the school deal with conflict?

99

BELIEFS / ATTITUDES
about conflict

CONFLICT OCCURS

CONSEQUENCE
reinforces
escalation
de-escalation
resolution
hurt feelings
better / poorer
relationships

RESPONSE
What we do when conflict occurs?
agree, cry, complain, smile, joke ...
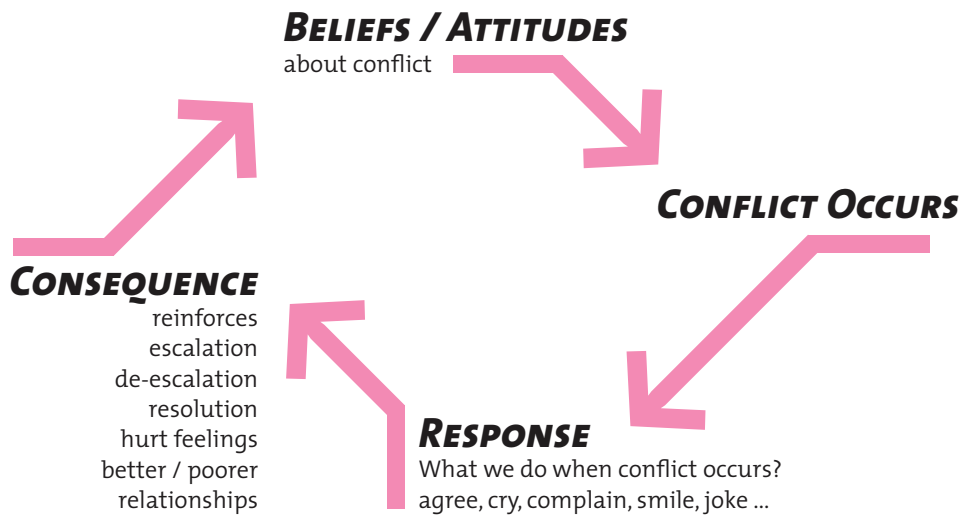
Conflict Cycle

What we believe about conflict comes from the messages we received from, for example:

- *our parents;*
- *teachers;*
- *the media;*
- *our own experiences.*

These beliefs affect how we respond when a conflict occurs. It is, therefore, important to reflect upon where our messages have come from.

Questions for Reflection

Where did you get your messages about conflict?

What did you learn about conflict?

How was conflict dealt with in your home, with friends, in school or other workplaces?

Is it important that children, young people and adults learn about conflict?

What do you want children, young people and adults in the school community to learn about conflict?

What support do you need to facilitate this work?

100

Practical Steps for Dealing with Conflict Between People [7]

Do not let conflict fester. Address conflicts as early as possible, when there is the greatest possibility of resolving the conflict and restoring the relationship.

Talk directly to the person with whom you have the problem (providing there is no threat of physical violence). This is much better than sending a letter, shouting, throwing things or complaining to everyone else.

Think beforehand about what to say. It is important to be clear about what the problem is and how you feel about it.

Choose a good time and place and allow enough time. Try to find a quiet place where you will not be disturbed.

Do not blame the other person for everything, call names or tell him / her what should be done.

Listen and give the other person a chance to talk and try to learn how s/he feels about the problem. Do let her / him see that you are listening and that you are glad that the two of you are talking together.

Give information about how you see the problem and how you feel about it.

Talk it through, and once you start, try to talk about all the things that bother you - even the 'difficult' areas or the things that niggle you.

Plan for the future and begin work on a way forward together. Try to make sure that both of you are going to work at it. Be specific about what you agree.

Escalation and De-escalation of Conflict

The effect of most responses to a conflict is either escalation or de-escalation. It is helpful to understand the conditions that contribute to each of these.

A conflict will be more likely to increase or escalate when:

- other people become involved in the dispute and take sides;

- one or both people feel(s) threatened by the other;

- there is no interest or investment in maintaining the relationship;

- there is a history of unproductive, negative conflict between the parties;

- there is an increase in the acting out (indirect expression) of anger, fear or frustration;

- important needs involved are not acknowledged and met;

- there is a lack of the skills necessary for peacemaking or a lack of awareness of the skills the parties do, in fact, possess;

- there is limited, ineffective communication.

A conflict will be more likely to decrease or de-escalate when:

- those involved focus on the problem rather than on each other;

- emotions of anger, fear and frustration are expressed directly rather than demonstrated indirectly;

7 Adapted from material developed by Mediation Northern Ireland.

101

- threats are reduced or eliminated;

- the people involved have co-operated well prior to the dispute;

- needs are openly discussed;

- communication is effective;

- the people involved are able to use their peacemaking skills, or they receive some help in applying them.

Mediation
a 'neutral' body in the dispute, assisting communication between individuals or groups in order to manage or overcome difficulties and effect positive change.

Negotiation
to attempt to come to an agreement on something through discussion and compromise.

Sample Programme: Exploring Conflict

TIME AVAILABLE:
Three hours *

AGE GROUP:
KS3+ or adult

INTENDED LEARNING OUTCOMES:
- *explore our perceptions of conflict*
- *reflect on how we have learned about conflict*
- *develop understanding of and assess our own conflict style*

1   WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION:
- *Share aims for the session*
- *Reminder of contract / guidelines*

2   ACTIVITIES:

'Conflict' Wordstorm
Purpose:
to focus thinking, gather thoughts, personal and group reflection

Resources:
flipchart, markers

Gather ideas about the term 'conflict', writing all the comments on the board. Once all the thoughts have been exhausted, ask the group to identify from the words the ones which were positive and the ones which were negative. Ask individuals to reflect on the range of negative and positive words and explore what the overall perception of conflict is and how this impression has been formed.

Conclude with a discussion around the question, 'Where have we learnt about conflict?'
A definition of conflict can be presented at this stage. Use the starting points highlighted at the start of this section.

772

Personal, Local and Global Conflict: Pairs Discussion

Purpose:
to explore the levels at which conflict occurs

Resources:
paper, pens

In pairs, ask each group to identify the type and range of conflicts that occur at a personal, local and global level. Reflect on these lists and ask each pair to identify which of the listed conflicts are destructive and which are constructive.

Conflict Spectrum

Purpose:
self-reflection, to establish a baseline of understanding

Resources:
paper, markers

Using the full space of the room, place at one end of the room the statement 'Avoid conflict' and at the other end 'Confront conflict'. Individuals are asked to imagine a line between both ends of the room and to stand at a point in the line in relation to their perceived approach to conflict. When individuals are positioned they are encouraged to explain their place and ask each other questions.

Difficulties in Dealing with Conflict

Purpose:
self-reflection, communication skills, skill analysis in managing conflict

Resources:
flipchart, markers

In small groups, ask individuals to share their answers on what they see as the blocks which they face in dealing with conflict.

These can be written up on the board / flipchart. Using this information, ask individuals to discuss the most appropriate way of dealing with the range of conflicts that they may face.

You could develop this activity further by using role-play of the situations they come up with.

3 CLOSURE:

Sentence Completion

Purpose:
review and evaluation, communication skills, encouraging the participation of all

Use a sentence completion statement around the circle: 'One new thought about conflict …'

* Alternatively, this session could be delivered in 45 minute sections. It will be important to allow for introduction and closure for each one.

103

774
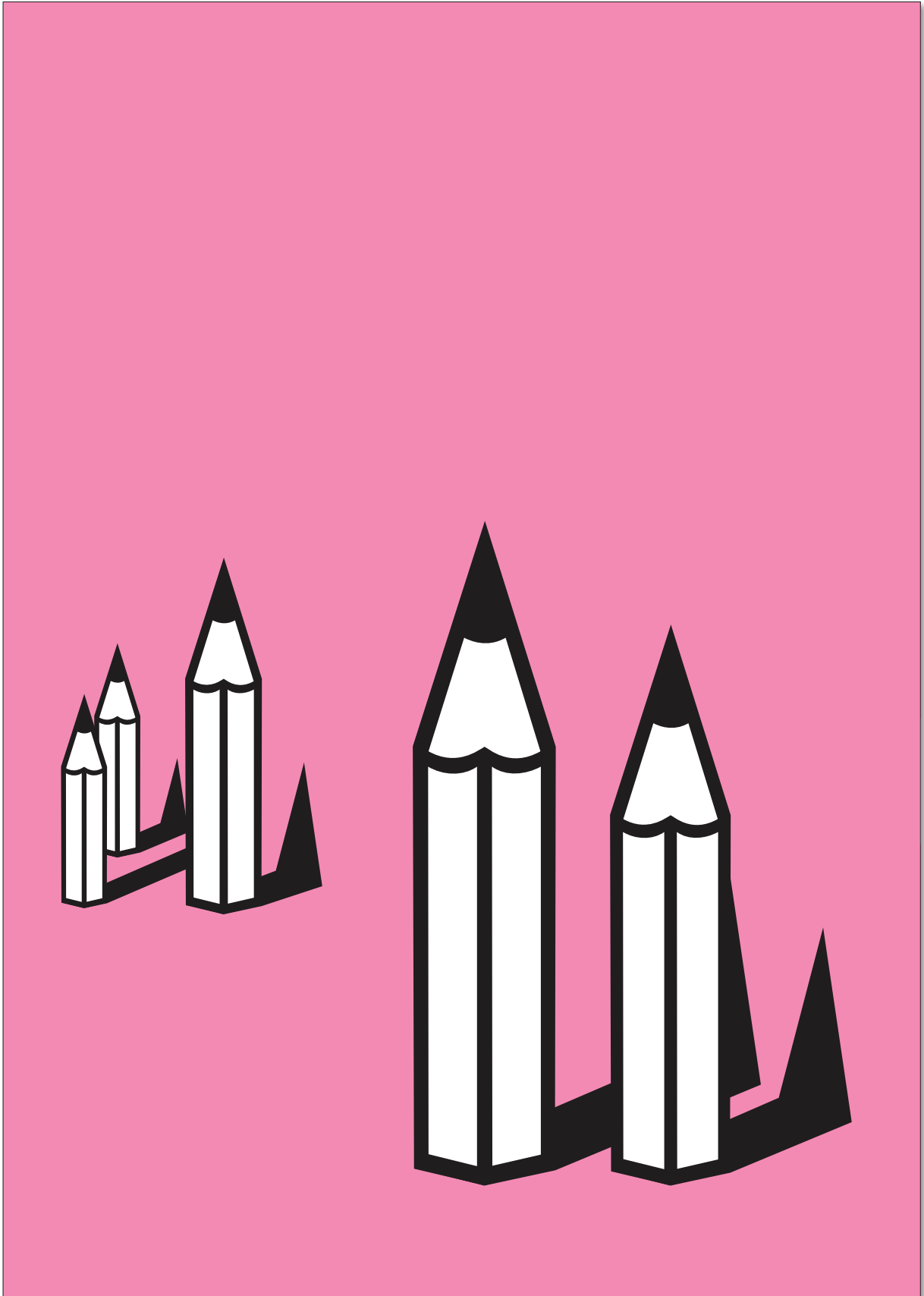
Developing Programmes

For Children, Young
People and Adults

'Children will always need safe

spaces for learning. They will

always need launching pads

from which to follow their

curiosity into the larger world.'

SENGE, P. ET AL (2000), SCHOOLS THAT LEARN,
LONDON, NICHOLAS BREALEY PUBLISHING.

developing programmes

5.0
Creating Safe Space

WHAT IS 'SAFE SPACE'

A 'safe space' within groupwork and the classroom / school is one where everyone is enabled to reflect individually and together on the themes which are raised, and to apply that learning to their life experience. It will be a space where people feel supported to take appropriate risks in talking about their personal experiences and views, in building relationships and in exploring areas of potential and actual conflict.

A safe space does not necessarily mean that group members will find these things easy to talk about, or that they will agree about everything – in fact, it is much more likely that there will be a range of perspectives. What it does mean is that they will feel able to trust the rest of the group and that the overall experience of participation will be positive.

The principles and ethos which characterise a 'safe space' have been explored in more detail in Building a Positive Learning Environment: Using Groupwork and Facilitation (Section Three). In this section, we consider the practical tools and ways of working which can be used to build this kind of atmosphere and setting.

STRATEGIES FOR CREATING SAFE SPACE

The strategies outlined in this section give some ideas about the reasons why different tools and methodologies are used, and about what makes them effective. Their overall effectiveness is grounded in respectful, relaxed facilitation which values each group member and is aware of their needs, interests and potential.

Questions for Reflection

What do I understand to be a 'safe space'?

What things might make me feel unsafe and might restrict my participation / facilitation?

As you work through this section, consider:
- *How could these tools and strategies build my sense of safety as a participant or a facilitator?*
- *As a facilitator, how could these tools and strategies enable me to contribute to the safety of group members?*

107

5.1
Working in a Circle

Circles have been used as a forum for meeting throughout history and within many different cultures. A circle is an appropriate structure for groupwork because it:

Encourages Equality
There is no beginning or end to a circle, no fixed 'first place / last place', no hierarchy and no leader. It is helpful, therefore, if everyone has the same seating.

Builds Trust
Everyone can see and hear everyone else, and may talk more honestly about experiences and views when they can see everyone else's reactions. The contrast, for example, might be rows of desks where a child or young person in the front row worries about what reactions might be happening behind as s/he speaks.

Encourages Participation
The nature of the circle and the use of tools such as a talking object encourage each person to contribute as s/he feels able. It is also easier to move about if an exercise requires it.

Promotes a Sense of Belonging
As people participate they can be encouraged to think about themselves as a team and increase their support to each other.

Creates Opportunities for Affirmation
When giving affirmation, the giver and the listener can see each other easily.

Encourages a Sense of Personal and Group Responsibility
The equality within the circle and the supportive group setting encourages people to take responsibility for themselves and develop this as a group. For example, this might be around what they contribute to the sessions and how they keep the ground rules they have developed in their contract / learning agreement.

Questions for Reflection

What experience do I have of working in a circle, either as a participant or a facilitator?

What key reasons make working in a circle valuable?

Do I feel comfortable and confident working in a circle?

Where can I gain some experience, training or support in relation to this?

How can I best familiarise group members with this way of working?

What resources might I need?

Some Strategies for Circle Based Work

Not all children, young people or adults will feel comfortable speaking in a large circle all the time. There are a number of different strategies which you can use to encourage and support group members in their participation. These include:

Using a talking object
An object is passed around the circle, and the person who is holding it is allowed to speak. This helps the group members to focus on and develop listening skills, as well as enabling them to see when their turn is coming.

Being able to say, 'Pass'
While you want to encourage everyone to participate, there may be some who feel unable to do so from time to time, and being allowed to say, 'Pass' can take the pressure off

108

these people. Sometimes people say, 'Pass' because they have not had time to think, so it is worth asking at the end of a circle round whether there is anyone who passed who now feels ready to contribute.

Using partners or small groups with feedback

Some people feel much more comfortable speaking to one other person or to a smaller group. It is good to mix in activities where group members work in pairs or in small groups (threes or fours) and then provide feedback about their discussion to the large circle. Not only does this support participation in general, but it also enables more in-depth discussion of the theme being explored. Feedback to the large circle may form the basis for a whole group discussion.

Supporting shy or less confident participants

There may be individuals who consistently find it difficult to participate and who may need specific support to enable them to grow in confidence. In part, this is about sensitive and appropriate facilitation, as well as recognising that listening is as important a form of participation as speaking. Specific strategies, such as the use of puppets and masks as a medium to talk through, can be useful in this process. With younger children, allowing a friend to speak for them or asking them if they would like to sit beside you so that you can speak for them can be useful starting points. It is important to try to move on from this position by using some of the other strategies outlined above.

What is Circle Time?

The term 'Circle Time' has come into increasingly common usage in schools. While often associated more with primary schools, it is also a valuable methodology for use at Post-Primary level, particularly where pupils are already familiar with the process from their primary school experience, and for use with adults (for example, in staff meetings, with a group of parents).

The purposes behind it include developing:
- *self-esteem and self-discipline;*
- *communication skills;*
- *emotional literacy;*
- *positive relationships and a sense of team;*
- *problem-solving and conflict resolution skills.*

It is most effective when:
- it is part of a whole school approach, where all school staff work within the context of the ethos which it promotes and operate a consistent rewards and sanctions policy;

- adults in the school community participate in Circle Time, and understand its purpose and structures;

- all classes have regular Circle Time sessions, so that children and young people experience progression in their learning through their years at the school;

- Circle Time sessions have a clear purpose, structure and intended learning outcomes.

One such model is the Whole School Quality Circle Time Model developed by Jenny Mosley. [1] Her books provide information on how the model works, including suggested outlines for individual Circle Time sessions with different age groups. See the Resource List (Section Eight) for further details.

1 Mosley, J. (2000), Quality Circle Time in the Primary Classroom, Wisbech, LDA; Mosley, J. and Tew, M. (1999), Quality Circle Time in the Secondary Classroom, London, David Fulton Publishing.

109

Questions for Reflection

What kind of school ethos would support effective Circle Time work?

How can I practically integrate Circle Time into my teaching plans and classroom ethos?
- *When would be the best time in the week / within the module / training programme?*
- *How will I introduce it to the class / group?*
- *What planning and evaluation time do I need?*

What personal preparation would I need to do?

What support / training needs do I have?

What resources might I need?
- *ideas for structure, activities, etc.?*
- *support or co-facilitation at the start?*

How can I reinforce the Circle Time learning within other aspects of classroom work / training and development, and vice versa?

Developing an Outline for Circle Time [2]

Intended Learning Outcomes
In preparing for the session, you need to start by defining your purpose and intended learning outcomes for the series of Circle Time sessions and for this particular session. The learning outcomes should:

- *address specific individual and group learning needs;*
- *enable continuity and progression between sessions;*
- *encourage risk-taking within a safe environment;*
- *provide you with a starting point for selecting focused and purposeful activities.*

Welcome and Introduction
It is important to set a positive atmosphere at the start of the session and to remind participants briefly of important ground rules. This demonstrates to group members that both they and the activity which they are participating in are valued. These statements will also explain what the session is about so that the participants are clear about what is expected of them. It also makes links to past and future sessions.

Introductory Game
This game aims to:

- *create a relaxed atmosphere;*
- *encourage mixing and new friendships / working partnerships;*
- *provide a fun / light introduction to the theme being explored;*
- *allow the facilitator to assess the group situation and respond flexibly to group and individual learning needs.*

2 Adapted from a Circle Time format and guidelines developed by Kathryn Edgar, SEELB.

Sentence Completion

Participants are given a 'sentence starter' to complete which will focus on the theme being explored. Asking for a volunteer to start, the 'talking object' is then passed around the circle enabling everyone to have a turn in speaking. This activity:

- *encourages group participation;*
- *assists in developing thinking, talking and listening skills;*
- *develops confidence in speaking in a group;*
- *encourages self-reflection (identification of personal needs, feelings, etc.) and responsibility for self.*

Discussion Activity / Sharing more Information

This is where the main exploration of the theme will take place, and where use of pairs / small group work, role-play, creative arts activities, etc. with feedback to the large circle can be useful tools. Effective activities will demonstrate development across a wide range of skills as well as achievement of your specific intended learning outcomes.

Closure

It is important that the Circle Time session is brought to an appropriate close so that participants can move on to whatever they are doing next. This needs to involve all group members and might take the form of:

- *a Closing Circle (possibly using sentence completion) which allows people to evaluate the session or say how they are feeling;*
- *a game to release any tension;*
- *a simple guided meditation to help bring a sense of calm to the group;*
- *an affirmation exercise.*

Evaluation / Planning Ahead

As you consider how the Circle Time has gone and plan for the next Circle Time session, some questions to consider are:

- *What feedback did I obtain from the group?*
- *What other evidence is there that intended learning outcomes are being achieved?*
- *Were the intended learning outcomes and activities focused at the right level? Do I need to make adjustments for future sessions?*
- *What will be the next step in terms of continuity and progression?*

111

780

Planning a Circle Time Session [3]

TIME AVAILABLE

THEME / TITLE

AGE GROUP

RESOURCES NEEDED

INTENDED LEARNING OUTCOMES

-
-
-

Welcome and Introduction:

Introductory Game / Activity:

Sentence Completion:

Discussion Activity / Sharing More Information:

Closure:

EVALUATION / PLANNING AHEAD

3 Adapted from a Circle Time format by Kathryn Edgar, SEELB.

5.2
Developing a Contract / Learning Agreement

A contract is essentially an agreement between all of those involved in a group (both facilitators and participants) about the ground rules which they need in order to work together safely and effectively.

This needs to be based on a shared understanding of the group's purpose, and a commitment from all group members to work within the agreed rules. The issues being addressed need to be perceived as relevant to all group members, and the reasoning behind any ground rule needs to be clear to everyone. They may be about the way people relate to each other within the group, the way people participate, and general expectations about behaviour.

Why Use a Contract / Learning Agreement?

Creating a contract or learning agreement together is an important part of a group's development. Some of the reasons for using a contract are that:

• A contract enables each person in the group to have a sense of ownership for the group and the framework within which they are working together. With this in mind, both the contract and any possible sanctions need to be discussed and agreed by the group.

• A contract asks each person in the group to take responsibility for her / himself and to be accountable to each other for how the experience of the group develops. It is not the facilitator's role alone to call people back to the contract, although it may be appropriate for them to do this at times.

• A contract enables a group to clarify their purpose and hopes for their time together. If the facilitator is coming from outside the group, it ensures that s/he and the group are agreed on the purpose of their work together.

• A contract enables a group to think about their needs as individuals and as a group in order to feel safe and comfortable to participate.

• A contract helps people to know what is expected of them within the group.

• A contract allows people to explore the meaning behind the words they use, and to think carefully about what different values or ground rules mean in practice. For example:

• *What does 'respect' mean in practice?*
• *When we ask everyone to participate, how do we ensure that each person feels safe to do that at a comfortable level?*
• *When we talk about confidentiality, what are some of the limitations and responsibilities around this (for example, the facilitator's responsibilities in relation to Child Protection)?*

• Within this context, a contract helps create a setting where people feel safe enough, for example, to discuss more controversial issues, to take appropriate risks around sharing personal experiences and views and to listen to those of others without feeling defensive.

Making an Effective Contract / Learning Agreement

In order for the contract to be used effectively, it is important that it is genuinely agreed by all group members and that it remains relevant to their context. There are a number of factors which it is useful to bear in mind in relation to this:

• In order to keep the contract 'live' it needs to be re-visited at different stages of the group's time together to ensure that the guidelines within it are still relevant and do not need to be revised. This will be particularly important if a new person joins the group.

113

- The group also need to consider what the consequences will be if the contract is broken, both in terms of the implications for the group's experience and in terms of appropriate 'sanctions'.

- There need to be clear distinctions between Safety Rules (for example, fire procedures) which are non-negotiable, and the ground rules within the contract which are agreed by the group.

- Where possible, particularly at a classroom level, it is usually helpful to create one set of ground rules together which apply to all activities which the class group is involved in both in the classroom and outside. These also need to be consistent with the general school rules.

- It is usually best to keep the contract fairly short and straightforward. If there are too many rules, people can find it hard to remember and apply them, and can feel restricted by the very fact that they are there.

- It is helpful to display the agreed contract as a visible reminder to people about what they have committed themselves to.

☑

DRAWING UP A CONTRACT / LEARNING AGREEMENT

1 Outline and check understanding of the purpose of the programme / session.

2 Explain the need for ground rules.

3 Gather suggestions for rules and note them down where everyone can see them. This can be done as a whole group, or by working in pairs / small groups and feeding back to the large group. It is important that all contributions are valued.

4 Decide together which rules are most necessary and appropriate.

5 Keep the list of ground rules manageable.

6 Together make a commitment to try to keep the agreed rules. You may like to sign your names to the contract to show your ownership of it.

7 Display the finalised rules where everyone can see and re-visit them at the start of the next few sessions, and at intervals after that.

Contracting with All Age Groups

It is possible to develop a contract with any age group, but it is important that the language used is age appropriate.

Younger groups may need more prompts to help them come up with ideas, and it is important to keep their list of rules short. When re-visiting the contract at the start of a session, it can be used as a memory exercise. Where children have not yet learnt to read, pictures can be used to represent the different rules. Even with older young people and adults, pictures and symbols representing the different ground rules can be useful.

114

When Time is Short

When working with a group within a very limited time-frame, it is still important that some ground rules are put in place. The facilitator needs to clearly outline the purpose for the group's time together and, in presenting a small number of ground rules, needs to ensure that participants understand the reasoning behind them.

This circumstance should be the exception, rather than the rule – time taken with a group at the start of a programme or an academic year to develop and agree a contract together will be time well spent in the long run!

If the Contract is Broken

It is important that the group understands that if the contract is broken there are consequences in terms of the quality of relationships within the group, the level of trust, willingness to participate and to share personal experiences and opinions, etc.

Having involved all group members in drawing up the contract, they should also be involved, where possible, in deciding what the sanctions will be if the contract is broken. This discussion will take time, but is of great importance because it demonstrates the way the contract is valued, and enables group members to use and develop skills such as listening, empathy, conflict resolution, etc. Some key tasks for the facilitator within this process will be:

• enabling everyone, including those who have broken the contract and those who may have suffered as a consequence to feel safe to participate in this discussion;

• encouraging the group to listen to and understand different perspectives in the group;

• providing guidance in developing appropriate sanctions – children and young people can sometimes tend towards overly harsh sanctions;

• checking all group members feel that the sanctions are appropriate and fair;

• ensuring sanctions are carried out fairly.

It is crucial that the facilitator ensures fairness when the contract is broken, and that a similar process is followed each time so that there is no sense of some people being punished arbitrarily.

If a rule in the contract keeps being broken, there are a number of options:

• It may reveal a low level of skill in relation to a particular rule (for example, listening to each other) among some or all group members. The programme could be revised in order to spend more time on skill development.

• More work may need to be done around empathy so that group members have a greater understanding of the consequences of their actions and the impact on others.

• It may be that some aspects of the contract are no longer appropriate for the group, and it needs to be re-negotiated.

• It may be that some group members have not understood the importance or relevance of a particular rule, and this needs to be re-clarified.

• It may be that new members who have joined the group since the original contract was made, do not understand the reasoning behind some of the rules or do not have any sense of ownership of the contract. A new contract needs to be developed that is owned by the whole group, or at the very least, the existing contract needs to be re-visited and amendments made.

SAMPLE CONTRACT

We agree to:

- Listen to each other

- Give each person a chance to speak – don't interrupt

- Respect each other's opinions – agree to disagree

- Support each other / be kind – no put downs

- Speak for myself – use 'I' statements: for example, 'I think', 'I feel'

- Keep confidentiality – what is said in the room, stays in the room*

- Respect people's right to pass / not answer personal questions

- Have fun!

* In agreeing to maintain confidentiality, which will enable people to participate without fear of repercussions beyond the session, it is important that the facilitator is clear that this cannot be absolute when the facilitator has responsibilities in relation to Child Protection. The commitment of group members to keeping this ground rule, balanced by individuals taking responsibility for what they choose to say, is crucial for people's safety outside the programme as well as within it.

Sample Exercises: Ways into Contracting

Suns and Clouds

Purpose:
to explore people's hopes and fears about the group's programme, ensuring that hopes are realised and fears / concerns are minimised by developing a contract

Resources:
paper cut-out sun (yellow); paper cut-out cloud (blue) - or people can make them for themselves (paper, scissors, crayons / pens)

Each person in the group is given a cut-out sun / cloud. The sun represents their hopes for the session and the cloud represents their fears / concerns. They are asked to write or draw a hope on the sun and a fear / concern on the cloud.

These hopes and fears can be shared in the group in a number of ways, for example by:

116

785

- laying them all on the floor, or sticking them all on the wall, so that people can come and look at them. This way they remain anonymous;

- collecting them all in a box, and getting each person to pick one sun and one cloud from the box. They are then read out / shown around the circle. Again, they remain anonymous;

- going around the circle, allowing each person to read out / describe her / his hope and fear.

This can be followed by a group discussion, perhaps using questions such as:

- Does anyone have any comment that they would like to make about the hopes / fears we have shared?

- Is there anything in particular anyone has observed about the hopes / fears we have shared?

At this point, people have the opportunity if they wish to point out their own hope or fear to make a more detailed comment on it.

Ideal Island

Purpose:
to think creatively about an ideal setting, specifically, about rules / laws which would ensure that it remained ideal for everyone, providing a basis for rules needed in the classroom / school

Resources:
large sheet of paper (A3+)
smaller sheets of paper to draw / prepare on
coloured pens, pencils, etc.
scissors, glue, old magazines, newspapers

Situation:
After being shipwrecked you and a few friends find yourselves stranded on a small island.

There may be others living on the island but you are not sure.

Group activities:
- *Think of a name for your island.*
- *Draw your ideal or perfect island - natural resources? food? housing? other buildings? roads? etc.*
- *Make a list of laws you think will be needed to make sure that people can live safely and happily on your island.*

Other questions you could think about:
- *What kind of government will you have?*
- *What punishments will you have for those who break the laws?*
- *What jobs will you and your friends do?*
- *What kind of schools will you have?*
- *What do specific groups need on the island (for example, elderly people, families)?*
- *What other things will be important?*
- *What will you do if you discover other people living on the island?*

Evaluation:
- *How did you get on in your group?*
- *Did your group work well together?*
- *Did one person take leadership / control?*
- *How did you decide on what laws / rules to have?*
- *Do you think that if you stuck to your laws everyone would be safe and happy?*
- *When you wanted different things, how did you work that out?*

The maps and ideas can then be presented to the large group, and the maps displayed. The large group can use the ideas about laws / rules as the basis for thinking about what rules we need to ensure that the classroom / school is a place where everyone feels welcomed, is able to learn and can enjoy being.

5.3
Developing Skills in a Group

'Emotional life is a domain that, as surely as math or reading, can be handled with greater or lesser skill, and requires its unique set of competencies ... emotional aptitude is a meta-ability; determining how well we can use whatever other skills we have.'[4]

As well as developing her / his own interpersonal and facilitation skills, the facilitator needs to support group members in building the skills which will enable them to make best use of the learning experience. These skills will be useful not only for this process, but in the whole of their lives. There are a number of overlapping skills areas which will be involved, including those outlined below.

INTRAPERSONAL SKILLS

These skills focus on developing the ability to think about what is going on 'inside me', and are essential for assimilating learning and moving forward on a personal level. They include aspects and qualities such as:

- *Self-awareness / Self-knowledge*
- *Self-reflection*
- *Self-respect / Self-esteem*
- *Self-management / Self-responsibility*
- *Self-motivation*
- *Openness and honesty*
- *Assertiveness*
- *Emotional literacy: awareness and clear expression of personal feelings, values, etc.*
- *Effective self-expression of opinions, ideas, etc.*

This skill area focuses on questions such as:

- How do I feel about this and why?
- What do I think about this and why?
- What have I learnt?
- How will this shape my future thinking, feelings, actions?
- Are there things I need to think about or do differently? If so, what?
- How will I do this? Do I require help to do it?

INTERPERSONAL SKILLS

These skills are about the way we relate to and interact with others. They are essential for making the best of our relationships, both personal and professional, and enable us to maximise our learning from each other. They include aspects and qualities such as:

- *Active listening*
- *Communication*
- *Respect for others*
- *Respect for and understanding of diversity*
- *Working co-operatively, as part of a team*
- *Empathy*
- *Affirmation of others*
- *Managing and resolving conflict*

This skill area focuses on questions such as:

- What can we learn from each other?
- How can we best work on this together?
- Have I really understood what you are saying and feeling? Do I need to check it out?
- Do we have a good understanding of and respect for each other's positions?
- Do you know the specific ways in which I value our relationship / conversation / interaction?
- Can I / we find a way of positively acknowledging and responding to the conflict between us?

118   4 Goleman, D. (1996), Emotional Intelligence, London, Bloomsbury Publishing.

THINKING AND PROBLEM-SOLVING SKILLS

These skills are about the way we process ideas and draw conclusions both individually and collectively. They include aspects such as:

- *Creative thinking*
- *Critical thinking*
- *Identifying issues*
- *Recognition of multiple perspectives, possibilities, solutions*
- *Reflection*
- *Decision-making*
- *Negotiation*
- *Mediation*

This skill area focuses on questions such as:

- What sparks creativity within me?
- Are my thinking skills strongest:
- if I have peace and quiet for myself?
- when I can work collaboratively with others?
- what are the benefits of these for me?
- Do I take what I see / hear / read for granted, or do I ask questions and analyse it?
- Do I think before I speak?
- How do I make major decisions?
- In a discussion, how do I think through and present my views?
- In a situation of conflict, am I able to imagine a number of possible solutions?
- Am I able to work with others to come to a shared conclusion, or a respectful difference of conclusions, where appropriate?

ACTIVE LISTENING

One of the key skills upon which many others can be built is active listening. This is a crucial skill for both facilitator and group members as it is essential for good communication.

Active listening is about absorbing what has been said and ensuring that the speaker knows that s/he has been heard. This is conveyed to the speaker through both verbal and non-verbal responses.

The effectiveness and usefulness of active listening will be undermined for both the speaker and the listener if:

- the listener is experiencing anxiety or other strong emotions which distract her / him from focusing on what the speaker is communicating both verbally and non-verbally;

- the listener has a negative or judgemental attitude which prevents her / him from listening with openness to what the speaker has to say;

- the meeting place is inappropriate: too many distractions, poor acoustics etc.

People will not feel that they are being heard if, for example:

- the listener is looking elsewhere and is giving no eye contact;

- the listener is demonstrating very 'closed' body language;

- it becomes apparent that the listener is so busy thinking about her / his response that s/he is not really hearing what is being said;

- the listener interrupts and goes on to something else;

- her / his contribution is ignored, not valued or negatively judged.

119

People will feel that they are being heard if, for example:

- the listener's facial expression and eye contact shows that s/he is paying attention;

- the listener's body language indicates that s/he is relaxed and attentive;

- the listener demonstrates that s/he is listening and interested by encouraging the speaker, and asking open-ended questions allowing her / him to develop what s/he is saying;

- the listener clarifies / reflects back what the speaker has said to ensure that the listener has understood.

Questions for Reflection

How effective are my active listening skills?

What evidence do I have of this?

What distracts me from listening actively to the people I work with?

When listening to someone, how aware am I of:
- *my body language;*
- *my facial expressions;*
- *my thoughts, feelings, etc.*

Do I take time to reflect back what has been said to make sure that I have understood?

How can I best support group members in developing active listening skills?

Sample Exercises:
Developing Listening Skills

Newspaper Game

Purpose:
to introduce a session on listening and communication

Resources:
newspaper cuttings, paper, pens

People are asked to find a partner and to stand at opposite ends of the room. Those at one end of the room are given a newspaper cutting each, and their partners are given a piece of paper and a pen. When the facilitator says, 'Go', the people with the newspaper cuttings have to read them out while their partners write down what they hear. Each pair gets two points for every word and one point for every piece of punctuation they get right. This can get very noisy!

What I had for Breakfast

Purpose:
to begin to explore what it feels like not to be listened to

People are asked to find a partner, and label themselves A and B. A's task is to tell B all about what s/he had for breakfast, while B has to do everything s/he can to make sure s/he does not hear – this can involve covering her / his ears, making lots of noise, running away, etc. – but not using physical violence! After a few minutes they swap over and do it the other way round. In the pairs and then in the large group, questions can then be explored around:

- *what it felt like not to be listened to;*
- *what it felt like to deliberately not listen to someone else;*
- *what the consequences of this could be.*

120

Chair / Table / Flower

Purpose:
to explore how much we actually listen to what other people say

Resources:
slips of paper with a word written on each (for example, chair, table, flower, tree)

People are asked to find partners and to label themselves A and B. A is given one of the slips of paper which s/he must not show to B. A's task is to describe the word on her / his paper without using the word itself for three minutes. Following these instructions, they begin. At the end of the three minutes, the Bs are told that they must now repeat back to the As everything they said within the three minutes. In most cases they will find this almost impossible, as they will have switched off from what A was saying as soon as they thought they had worked out what the word was. In the large group questions can then be explored around, for example:

- *how much real listening we do;*
- *how we can jump to conclusions and stop listening;*
- *why we might do this;*
- *how we value each other if we do not listen.*

Personal Space / Magic Spots

Purpose:
to take time individually to listen to the sounds around us that we may not normally notice

Everyone goes and finds a space on their own, preferably outside and not talking to anyone else. They then spend ten minutes (vary as appropriate to the group) listening to the sounds around them. This also provides a space for individual reflection and listening to ourselves.

Pennies

Purpose:
to explore how we evaluate / make choices about what we have to say, how different people participate within a group, and the power balances involved in speaking and listening

Resources:
enough pennies or tokens (for example, cardboard cut-outs) to give three to five to each person in the group

Working in small groups, each person is given three to five pennies / tokens, and each group is given a topic to discuss. These might include:

- *men are better drivers than women;*
- *blondes have more fun;*
- *school uniform should be abolished;*
- *cigarette smoking should be made illegal;*
- *a topic which is directly relevant to the theme which the group is currently exploring – however, at this stage, do not introduce something that will take the group 'too deep' too soon within the process.*

Each person may only speak when s/he puts one of her / his pennies in the middle of the table, and once s/he has spent all her / his pennies s/he may not speak again. The group needs to create a supportive atmosphere where those who normally do not speak very much feel able to use their pennies.

This highlights questions and issues around, for example:

- the right and responsibility to speak;

- the choices we make about our participation;

- the way these choices impact on others;

- how much thought we put into what we are about to say;

121

- the fact that everyone has something of value to contribute;

- the frustration felt by those who are used to speaking a lot when they have to keep silent;

- the value of listening;

- issues of power and justice when the image of pennies is translated to group, community or global level. Who are the people in our society who have lots of pennies / power, who are the people who have little or no pennies / power? How does this affect the way they relate to each other?

5.4
Using Games

WHY USE GAMES?

The perception of games can be that they are 'just a bit of a laugh' and not really very valuable within the context of education and learning. They can be, however, purposeful exercises which have clear learning outcomes, and very useful tools when trying to create 'safe space'.

Some of the reasons for using games in this way are that:

- Games are fun - they can help people relax and have a laugh together, perhaps as an ice-breaker activity at the start of a process, or as a closure exercise to release tension after a more difficult discussion. Remember, if facilitators do not enjoy or feel confident about the experience, it is unlikely that group members will either!

- Games can enable people to get to know each other - they can allow people to learn each other's names, to talk to each other and to find out information about each other in a non-threatening way.

- Games can enable individuals to become a group - they can help people to become aware of each other and of each other's skills, needs, contribution to the group, etc., encouraging people to support each other and work together.

- Games can involve everyone - including those, for example, who may not feel so confident about speaking out in a discussion.

- Games can enable people to experience success and affirmation – and to demonstrate talents and achievements in a way that they might not, for example, in an academic setting.

- Games can enable people to develop skills - they can create opportunities for people to use skills such as listening, communication, co-operation / teamwork, aspects of leadership, problem-solving, etc.

- Games can enable people to learn - they can raise awareness and understanding of all kinds of issues, for example, sense of identity, diversity within a group, etc., and provide a more light-hearted introduction to deeper discussion or more demanding exercises.

Using Games Effectively

In order to be effective, the games which are chosen need to be appropriate for the particular group and the individuals within it.

Some people dislike the idea of games, especially ice-breakers, and others actually dread being asked to participate. This may be because of previous negative experiences and may be linked into concerns about:

- feeling stupid or embarrassed;

- feeling pressured to join in when they would rather not;

- the games seeming to have no real purpose;

- the games going on for too long;

- an atmosphere of tension rather than ease or appropriate challenge being created;

- a lack of thought on the facilitator's part as to whether the games are suitable for the group, its individual members and their purpose of meeting together;

- the games having an unexplained ulterior motive, known only to the facilitator(s).

To be most effective and enjoyable, games need to be chosen carefully so that:

- they are appropriate for the ages, cultural backgrounds, gender mix, physical and learning abilities, etc. within the group;

- they are appropriate for the stage in the group's life (i.e. how well people know each other and how comfortable they feel together as a group);

- they are physically safe;

- they fit within the values reflected in the contract or learning agreement you create with the group. For example, a game which leaves one person feeling left out and laughed at will not 'match' the values of respect, being supportive to each other or participation which are being encouraged within the group. Given that the games are an integral part of building the group, games which encourage competitiveness may not always be appropriate;

- they are purposeful and need to be included with particular learning or developmental outcomes in mind as an integral part of the overall learning experience.

123

Different Ways of Using Games

Outlined below are some specific ways in which games can be used. Some samples of each of these are provided at the end of the section. Many games can be used in a number of different ways and will be most effective if there is clarity about their purpose and appropriateness.

NAME GAMES

These enable group members to learn and remember each other's names in a fun way. These are particularly important when a group is coming together for the first time, but it can be helpful to use them again to refresh people's memories. Name games are also a valuable way into a theme such as 'Identity' because names are a core part of our sense of who we are.

ICE-BREAKER GAMES

These help a group to relax and feel comfortable with each other. Some groups will find these useful at the start of most sessions, but they are particularly important when a group comes together for the first time.

GROUP BUILDING GAMES

These encourage a group to build a relationship around a task, to work as a team and to develop trust. These games will also help a group to explore the roles which different individuals take on within a team and to begin to think about the skills which they need to work together effectively.

Some points to bear in mind:

• Some group building games involve physical challenge. It is important that games are chosen which are age and ability appropriate, and sufficient attention is given to health and safety.

• Similarly, some group building games involve physical contact. There may be cultural reasons why these games will be inappropriate for some groups or individuals. Some people may simply feel uncomfortable about physical contact with others of the same / opposite sex.

• Trust within a group will not be built by games alone. It is crucial that the level of trust within a group is not over-estimated and that sufficient time is given for trust to be developed. Awareness of the degree of trust within the group and being able to assess the appropriate level of risk-taking is a core part of the facilitator's role.

ENERGISING GAMES

These are games which help a group to re-engage with a process or task, for example, after a break or when energy levels are low, and will usually involve getting people to move around. They may also involve getting people to think about the theme or task from a different angle to encourage new ways of thinking and creativity.

BRAIN GYM [5]

These 'brain exercises' can be used to help a group to refocus on the process, as research has demonstrated that our brains actually work better if we take a break from what we are doing and try some of these kinds of physical activities at different points throughout the day. The exercises stimulate both sides of the brain, develop co-ordination and dexterity, and reduce stress or tension, which may enhance the end of a challenging session.

5 Smith, A. and Call, N. (2001), ALPS Approach Resource Book, London, Network Education Press.

Some Brain Gym Examples:

• Practice yawning! Stretch your mouth as wide as you can. Stick your chin out and move it from side to side.

• Hold your ears with your opposite hand and slowly roll your earlobes between finger and thumb.

• Stand with a partner shoulder to shoulder, now move apart so that you can touch the tips of your forefingers. Now try to trace a circle together.

• Sitting with your hands holding your seat, extend your feet forwards and rotate your feet together one way, then the other.

• Write the keywords from the lesson in the air with one hand.

• Trace the number eight in the air with two hands held together. Follow your hand movements with your eyes only. Keep your head still. Keep your lips and teeth together.

Session Preparation: Choosing Games

• What is the purpose of the session?

• What are the intended learning outcomes?

• Would a game(s) be useful?
• *as an ice-breaker?*
• *to develop skills and a sense of team?*
• *to introduce the theme?*
• *to re-energise or re-focus the group?*
• *to help close the session?*

• What game(s) would be appropriate for this particular group – their needs, abilities, ages, etc.?

• How will this fit the time and space available?

• Are there other considerations?

THEMED GAMES

These provide a way for a group to begin to explore the theme of a particular session. The intention is to provide a safe, light-hearted way into a subject which can be explored in more depth through other exercises and discussions.

CLOSURE GAMES

These enable a group to bring a session to a close in a way which affirms their group identity and the positive relationships which have developed. If the session has involved more difficult discussion, a game which involves laughter and / or appropriate physical contact may help to diffuse any tension and enable the group to move on to whatever they need to do next.

125

Sample Games

A range of games and activities are included within the sample lesson / session plans in Section Eight.

Outlined below are some specific examples of the different kinds of games described within this section.

NAME GAMES

Name Graffiti

Resources:
large piece of paper (A3+), markers

Place a large piece of paper (A3+) and some coloured markers in the centre of the group. In turn or when they feel they want to, people write their name on the sheet and tell something about themselves - perhaps something about their name (such as, what it means). They can also draw a picture / symbol beside their name as a reminder to everyone of what they have said. The poster can then be displayed as a representation of the whole group.

Name and Action

Each person needs to think of an action to express her / himself. One person begins by saying, 'My name is ... and my action is ... ', and performs the action (for example, a clap, turning round, clicking fingers, etc.). The second person says, 'His / her name is ... and his / her action is ... . My name is ... and my action is ... ', This continues around the group. It is only a good idea to include the repetition of others' names and actions if the group is not too big, otherwise people can become bored and / or the task of remembering everything can become too threatening. The group needs to work together to help each person to remember – it is not a competition!

Alternatives:
name and rhyme / adjective / animal / food / country / etc., (starting with the same letter)

126

794

ICE-BREAKER GAMES

The Alphabet Game

Resources:
A4 size cards, each marked with a letter of the alphabet

Lay cards with the letters of the alphabet around the room. Invite participants to go and stand beside the letter which is at the start of, for example:

- *the place they live;*
- *the place they were born;*
- *their favourite food;*
- *their ideal holiday destination;*
- *the name of a person they admire;*
- *the last book they read;*
- *a film they have seen recently.*

Encourage participants to introduce themselves to the other people who are standing beside the same letter, and to find out their response to the statement that had been called out. If people are standing on their own beside some letters, encourage them to talk to the people near to them. This is a good game to use as an ice-breaker, to help people get to know each other and to talk informally, and to introduce the session theme.

Group Dividers

Sometimes it is necessary to divide a large group into smaller groups for the purpose of the session(s). If you want to try to avoid cliques, or the same people always working together, you could use one of the ideas below, rather than simply numbering people off. These games are useful at the ice-breaker stage as they are fun and require people to work together.

Animals

Resources:
sets of cards with animal names (same number of each name, enough in total for each group member to have one)

In silence, give each participant a card, having explained they are to find other members of their group by making the sound of their animal.

Dots

Resources:
a coloured sticky dot for each group member (using equal numbers of each colour)

Stick a coloured dot on each group member's forehead. In silence, they have to find the other people with the same colour of dot as themselves. Afterwards ask the group about how they worked out what colour dot they had and how they found the other members of their group.

Back-to-Back

Resources:
sticky labels, with the name of half of a pair written on each one (enough in total for each member of the group to have one)

A label is stuck on each person's back with, for example, an animal, a famous person, a fairy tale character, etc. written on it. Asking questions that can be answered with 'Yes' or 'No', they have to find out who they are, and then find the other half of their pair, or the other people who would be in the same group as them.

127

GROUP BUILDING GAMES [6]

People Machines

This exercise can be done in small groups. The group work together to create a machine, acting it out using themselves as parts – everyone in the group must be involved. They can then act it out for the rest of the large group to guess what it is. This can be done in silence or with the appropriate noises!

Alternatively, one person begins with an action and a noise, and others gradually join in, adding their action and noise, to create a connected imaginary machine.

Another version, is where a group work together to create a vehicle, using themselves as parts, to travel from one point to another. It can be a 'real' or imaginary one. The challenge is to include everyone in their group, and to actually get from A to B in one piece.

Human Knots

The group stands in a circle, hands outstretched and crossed in front of them. They move forward quietly and slowly with eyes closed and take hold of two hands - not the people on either side of them and not hands belonging to the same person! The group's task is to sort itself out into a circle again without letting go hands. If you have a very large group, divide it into smaller groups of a manageable size (about eight people).

Fawlty Towers

Resources:

newspapers, pieces of string, cardboard boxes, masking tape / sellotape, scissors
You could also add a couple of things which are 'red herrings'!

Working in small groups, the aim is to see how high a tower each group can build within a certain space of time. Afterwards, evaluate the exercise with the group, exploring how they worked together and what they learnt from the process. In order to develop the team building aspect, one or two members of the group can be blindfolded, one or two others can have their hands tied together, etc. Part of the evaluation will focus on how the group included these people, and how everyone worked together as a team.

ENERGISING GAMES

Paper Islands
Resources:
newspapers

Spread large sheets of newspaper on the floor. Explain that these pieces of paper are islands and that the other area is the shark-infested sea. While music is played the group moves around the room and when it stops they jump onto an island. Each time the group stops more paper is taken away.

Finish by seeing how many people can fit onto one large piece of newspaper.

Another version of this game is to divide people into pairs, and give each pair a sheet of newspaper the same size. Each time the music stops, they have to fold their newspaper in half and stand on it, so that each time the piece of newspaper gets smaller. The pair that can balance on the smallest piece of newspaper are the winners.

6 Be aware that many group building games involve a high level of physical contact and you need to consider whether this is appropriate for your group and / or the group's current stage of development.

128

Ducks and Corrals

The group is the corral fence and stands in a circle holding hands. Approximately four to six people volunteer to be ducks, and stand in the middle. They have to hold their ankles, close their eyes, quack and walk backwards! A break is made by the corral fence people at one point in the fence, and the ducks have got to find their way out. Once a duck has found the break, s / he has to quack loudly to let the other ducks know where it is. To prevent them hearing, the fence has to sing 'Row, row, row the boat' as loudly as they can. The game finishes when all the ducks have escaped.

BRAIN GYM
See examples on page 125

THEMED GAMES

Ideal Islands 2
Resources:
A3+ sheets of paper / flipchart paper, markers

This is a version of Ideal Islands which explores the themes of diversity, conflict and negotiation.

Working in groups of five to eight people, each group imagines that they are stranded on a desert island and as a new society, they have to come up with three to five rules which everybody on the island agrees to live by as their new constitution. They have 15 minutes to do this.

The group can also think about drawing up:
- *a map of their island;*
- *a list of all the things they would choose to have on their island;*
- *a list of all the things they would choose not to have on their island. These go in the surrounding sea.*

As the time draws to a close, ask for a volunteer from each group. While the remainder of the group finalises their constitution, privately brief the volunteers that they are to be washed from their original island and stranded on another island. On the new island, they will be presented with the constitution whereupon they will decide to break one of the rules. Their violation needs to be reasoned as they will need to justify it to the other islanders.

Bring the volunteers back into the room and allocate them to a new group, explaining they have been washed from their original island and landed on a new one. The original islanders are invited to introduce the new islander to their constitution. Once this is completed the new islander informs them that s/he cannot live by Rule X and must break it.

Leave the groups for about ten minutes and observe the process of settlement – whether it is compromise, expulsion, conflict, etc. Bring the groups back together, display the constitutions and discuss these questions:

- What was the original process of rule-making – consensus, majority decision, negotiation, etc.?

- What was the new arrival's experience of the new society?

- What were the settlements reached?

- Were any punishments given appropriate? Did they fit the crime? Who decided?

- What were the islanders' feelings when the constitution was broken?

- How do we deal with diversity, difference?

- What can people learn from this in terms of how they handle conflict?

129

CLOSURE GAMES

Affirmation Exercise

Resources:

paper, felt tip pens, ribbon (for scrolls)

These exercises focus on affirmation and recognition of people's qualities, skills and the aspects that you have enjoyed about spending time / working with them. It is one part of reflecting on the programme / session you have been involved in together. It also involves interaction and movement - good after a quiet / sitting down / discussion session! It is worth noting that some people may find giving and receiving affirmation difficult so this exercise can be a challenging one. Within the group, people can be gently encouraged to help each other and all comments must be positive.

1   Each person gets a piece of paper, writes her / his name on it, and sticks it on her / his back.

2   Everyone then has the opportunity to write on each other's pieces of paper, a skill or quality they have noticed that person has, or something s/he has contributed to the group, or something they have enjoyed about spending time / working with her / him. Try to write something on everyone's piece of paper.

One variation of this exercise is to get people to sit in a circle and draw around their hand on an A4 page, putting their name at the top. The hands can be passed round the group in a clockwise direction and each person writes an affirmation for the named individual on her / his sheet.

Another variation is to have an envelope with each person's name on it pinned on a noticeboard with slips of paper available so that people can write affirmations and put them in each person's envelope either in a structured session, or in their own time.

Where literacy may be an issue, the facilitator can gather the ideas verbally about each person and write them on a piece of paper which can then be turned into a scroll and presented to the person. Children and young people can then be encouraged to take these home to share with parents / carers who can re-read the affirmations to them.

Wool Web

Resources:

large ball of wool

A Wool Web can be used to explore all kinds of questions and discussion, and ensures that each person in the group has the opportunity to speak. One session it can be used for is a group evaluation.

1   Each person in the group thinks about a key question such as the following:

- *What has been the highlight of the session for you?*
- *What have you learned from / through the session?*
- *What have I enjoyed about this session?*
- *What have I learnt from other people in the group?*

2   One person takes the ball of wool, and gives her / his answers to the questions. S/he twists a bit of the wool around her / his finger (not too tight!), and throw the ball to the next person. This person then gives her / his answers, twists a bit of the wool around her / his finger, and throws the wool to someone else, and so on.

130

3 When everyone has spoken, you will all be linked up by a web of wool. This is a valuable way to talk about a subject which ensures that everyone in the group gets the opportunity to speak, and also provides a symbol of our inter-connectedness, i.e. that everyone is in relationship with each other at different levels - a good way to finish a session or a programme.

4 Now somebody has the fun of rolling the wool up again - the easiest way is if everyone lays it down on the floor as it is, and lets one person get on with rolling it up!

5·5
The Importance of Closure

Closure, the act of bringing things to an appropriate end, is important both for individual sessions / lessons and for finishing programmes / modules. In each case, people need to be supported to reflect on past experiences and to move on to whatever will be next for them.

In any session exploring controversial issues, there is the likelihood that people's emotions will be touched, some tension and anxiety may be experienced and some strong, conflicting views may be discovered. In order to ensure that people are able to leave the session feeling relaxed, with their relationships affirmed and the discussion appropriately brought to a close, it is important that sufficient time is always allocated for closure. In some cases, this will mean resisting the temptation to let the 'fantastic discussion' continue for 'just another five minutes'!

Achieving Closure

WAYS OF ACHIEVING CLOSURE AT THE END OF A SESSION / LESSON CAN INCLUDE:

• giving the group a brief (verbal or written) outline of the session / lesson plan at the start so that they know what to expect in terms of timing and the things which need to be covered before the end of the session;

• calling the group's attention to the time five to ten minutes before the end of the discussion / exercise so that they have a clear conception of the time-frame in which they are working and can bring it to an appropriate close;

131

- using a closure activity which allows group members to say something about how they are feeling at the end of the session;

- using a closure activity which allows group members to affirm their relationships with each other;

- using a closure activity which allows the release of any tension, for example, a game which involves having fun together.

Questions for Reflection

Have I left sufficient time for closure within my lesson / session plan?

Would it be useful to have a timekeeper other than myself to ensure that enough time for closure is left?

What are likely to be the key learning points that need to be drawn together at the end of the session?

Is this session likely to raise strong emotions? Will there need to be some form of closure relating to this?

What will be the most appropriate closure activities for this group at the end of this session?

WAYS OF ACHIEVING CLOSURE AT THE END OF A PROGRAMME OR MODULE CAN INCLUDE:

- The use of an entire session at the end of the programme / module for affirmation, reflection and looking ahead.

- Affirming what each person in the group has learnt and contributed, through giving certificates or prizes. The affirmation will be most effective if it is person specific, naming the particular learning and skills which have been evidenced.

- Celebrating the end of the programme / module – inviting guests to see the work that has been done, presenting certificates, having a special meal / cake, going on a relevant visit / trip, etc.

- Evaluating what has happened within the programme / module. As a form of closure, it allows group members to reflect on what they have been doing, the feelings they have experienced, what they have learnt, etc. and to contribute to the planning of future sessions, both for themselves and for others. Evaluation and reflection processes and tools are discussed more fully in Developing a Model for Self-evaluation (Section Six).

Ways of achieving closure at the end of an entire programme / module could also involve some of the suggestions for closure at the end of a session.

132

5.6
Other Groupwork Tools and Strategies

In addition to games and similar activities, there are a wide range of other tools and strategies which can contribute to the learning possibilities within a particular programme. A variety of styles and ways of working will allow the facilitator to cater for the breadth of learning styles within a group.

Some of the ways of working may be new to group members (and possibly to the facilitator), and this trying out of new experiences can be in itself a very valuable part of the learning process. In order that people feel able to take appropriate risks in trying something new, it will be especially important that the boundaries of safe space are securely in place and that clear introductions and explanations are given. It may also be appropriate to use other activities to build up to the new exercise / way of working rather than plunging straight in.

If the facilitator is trying something for the first time with a group;

- *thorough preparation;*
- *observing another facilitator using the activity / way of working (for example, on video);*
- *the opportunity to try the activity first as a participant (for example, with a group of colleagues);*
- *the support of a co-facilitator;*

can all help to build her / his confidence.

Questions for Reflection

Have I planned sufficient time into the programme / module for effective closure?

What closure elements are likely to be most useful for this particular programme and group:
- *affirmation;*
- *celebration;*
- *personal reflection;*
- *programme evaluation;*
- *looking ahead?*

What are the key learning points from the programme / module that need to be drawn together at the end?

Have I included sufficient time for group members to give me feedback on their learning and on the programme / module?

How will this feed into the overall evaluation of the programme / module?

What support or further learning / development opportunities may group members need beyond this particular programme / module?

Will group members be able to leave the final session with a sense of achievement, well-being and completion – and an openness to new challenges and learning?

133

801

Questions for Reflection

How do I feel about trying out new ways of working, or activities that are in a different style to what I normally use?

Are there opportunities I can take to try them out first as a participant or facilitator?
- *through a training / development session?*
- *with a supportive group of colleagues?*

Is there anyone I know who has used them before who I could talk to, or who could work with me?

A whole range of ways of working and activities are listed in the box below. Some of these are largely self-explanatory, but longer explanations are given for others. As explained in Using Games (Section Five), it is important to think carefully about which way of working / activity will best fulfil the purpose of the programme you are planning and will be most appropriate for the group with which you are working. There is some overlap between the different types of activity: for example, the learning from the more practically based activities will often need to be drawn out through a debriefing style discussion at specific points throughout or at the end of the activity.

- Wordstorm
- Group Debate
- Worksheet
- Puppets and Masks
- Circle Time
- Participant-led Discussions
- Collage
- Question and Answer
- Paired Work
- Journals
- Story
- Silent Personal Reflection
- Facilitator-led Discussions
- Role Play
- Reportage
- Small Group Work
- Walking Debate
- Facilitator roles, e.g. 'Devil's Advocate'
- Think, Write, Share
- Art-based activities
- Scenarios
- Presentations
- Practical Tasks or Challenges

134

Maximising Participation within the Group

As well as having different preferred learning styles, individual group members will also have different personalities, experiences, skills and levels of confidence / self-esteem.

These factors will impact upon the ways of working with which they feel most comfortable, for example, some people feel confident speaking within a large group, while others prefer to share ideas with one other person. If all of the activities take place within the large group, some people may never contribute their ideas and experience to the group. An appropriate mix of groupings could include the following:

INDIVIDUAL WORK

Giving people time and opportunity to think and reflect for themselves through thinking time, drawing or writing, etc. Sometimes it will be appropriate for them to share their thinking afterwards in pairs, small groups or the large group. You also need to consider whether it is appropriate for everyone to share their thoughts or whether it should just be volunteers.

PAIRED WORK

Encouraging people to work in twos can be of value in itself, or can give people the chance to test out their ideas with one person before sharing them with a larger group.

SMALL GROUP WORK

As well as being more comfortable for some group members, working in groups of three to five people allows the participation of a greater number of people within a limited time-frame. Where appropriate, the small groups (or a nominated speaker from each one) can feed back or show what they have discussed / made / learnt to the large group. If their work is visual (for example, ideas on a flipchart, a piece of art), these could be spread out on the floor or put up on the wall for other groups to walk around and look at instead of (or as well as) using verbal feedback.

> **NB. The nominated speaker from within the small group needs to be willing, not someone who has been negatively pressurised into taking it on.**

LARGE GROUP WORK

The large group includes everyone who is involved in the process, for example, the whole class, the whole staff team, etc. The advantages of work in the large group are that everyone is aware of and part of each stage of the process together. However, within a set time-frame and given people's different personalities and levels of confidence, it may limit participation and the wealth of contribution which people have to make to the process. It is useful for smaller groupings to feed back to the large group at various points during the process so that the learning can be gathered and there is a shared sense of purpose and direction.

CIRCLE TIME

This structured form of groupwork can enable everyone to participate, even in a large group. See Working in a Circle (Section Five).

135

Discussion-based Activities

FACILITATOR OR PARTICIPANT-LED DISCUSSIONS

In planning a programme or session, you do not need to assume that the facilitator will always be the person leading. There will be times when it is valuable to give group members opportunities to facilitate and lead particular activities and sessions. In all cases, it is important that the opportunity is appropriate and open to any group member who might benefit from it. This opportunity can:

- promote the concept of a democratic setting / classroom;

- give individual group members the opportunity to develop new skills;

- allow group members to share their knowledge, skills and interests;

- give group members the opportunity to receive feedback from the facilitator and from their peers;

- build confidence and self-esteem;

- give the facilitator a structured opportunity to learn from group members;

- allow the facilitator to take a break!

Questions for Reflection

Am I willing to consider handing over the facilitation of a particular activity or session to a group member?

Will this be appropriate:
- *in the context of the intended learning outcomes of the programme?*
- *for this particular group?*
- *for the broader personal development of the individual group members?*

What might be the specific learning outcomes from this particular experience for the individual concerned?

Are there particular feedback and reflection opportunities that I need to put in place for the individual and for the group when planning the programme?

Who would I consider offering the opportunity to? Am I restricting the opportunity inappropriately?

NB. Some children and young people (and adults!) whose behaviour is difficult within a group can rise to the challenge of being given this kind of responsibility, and demonstrate skills and maturity that might not otherwise have been evident.

136

FACILITATORS' ROLES

At times, it may be useful for facilitators to take on a particular role in order to challenge the group's thinking and to take their learning further. See The Facilitation Process (Section Three).

WORDSTORMING / IDEAS GATHERING

A simple way of getting a lot of useful ideas about a subject in a short period of time. It provides the opportunity for maximum participation and should increase self-esteem by valuing the contributions of everyone involved. It can be done in the large or small groups with feedback to the large group.

People are encouraged to say whatever comes into their head – it doesn't matter how silly / funny / odd the ideas are. Each person should only speak a couple of times on each idea. All ideas are written up on a large sheet of paper / flipchart with a felt tip pen / marker so that everyone can see the suggestions.

After five minutes or so (when the ideas stop flowing) you will end up with a list to start working on. You will engage the group in deciding which ideas have possibilities and which ideas are unrealistic in this situation. An alternative way to reach consensus on the ideas is to engage the group in voting for ideas that could be worked upon.

Example wordstorm results for the phrase: **Community Relations**

RELATIONSHIPS

SHARING IDEAS

CONFIDENT

DIFFERENCE

CONFLICT

OUR HISTORY

PEACE

FAIRNESS

PERSONAL HISTORY

RECONCILIATION

DIVISION

NORTHERN IRELAND

SECTARIANISM

HARD WORK

OPPORTUNITIES

EUROPE

FLAGS AND EMBLEMS

CULTURE

RACISM

POLITICS

RELIGION

137

GROUP DEBATE

This provides the group with a formal structure in which to discuss the different ways of looking at a particular theme or issue. Where the issue may be contentious, this has the advantage of 'containing' it. On the other hand, its focus can be reasoning-based and may limit people's reflection on how they feel about the theme in question.

The group selects the topic for discussion and volunteers are sought for the roles of protagonist (arguing the case for the motion), antagonist (arguing against the motion), chairperson, timekeeper, etc. The room needs to be laid out so that the group is in a semi-circle with the main speakers at the front. Following presentation of the case for each side and facilitated by the chairperson, group members can ask questions of the speakers. At the end, a vote can be held for and against the motion.

WALKING DEBATE

A walking debate works best with at least ten people and space is required for the whole group to stand in a line. Label one end of the room 'Agree' and the other 'Disagree' to create an invisible continuum. Alternatively, label the four corners of the room, 'Agree', 'Disagree', 'Don't Know' and 'Don't Care'. When using this exercise for the first time, begin the session with a light, non-controversial statement that invites opinion on a current television programme, football team, etc. If you are not going on to further discussion about the debate themes, it can also be useful to end the session with a similar statement. The Walking Debate can be used to support participants, for example:

- *to explore their opinions and feelings about different issues / themes;*
- *in evaluation of a session / programme;*
- *in resolving a classroom dispute;*
- *in gauging interest in a particular topic.*

Explain that you will be reading out statements and they must respond by choosing a place along the line depending on their strength of feeling, or go to the corner that most closely represents their view. It is important to encourage the group members not to go along with the crowd, but to follow their own instinct. Once they have taken up a position, you can ask questions of the individual members, encouraging them to explain to others in the group why they have taken up this position. This can lead to a group discussion on the issues raised – remember there are no right or wrong answers, the activity is all about discussion and debate. It is important to inform individuals that, it is okay for them to change their mind and to take up a different position. At some stage, it is possible that the discussion may become difficult to facilitate in a line and you may find it more useful to form a circle.

Sample statements:

- *Reality TV shows should be banned.*
- *Football players should have to give 30% of their income to charity.*

- *The legal voting age should be lowered to 16.*
- *People should have the freedom to fly the flag of their choice over their door.*
- *Class A drugs should be legalised.*

- *It is important for us to learn about other people's opinions.*
- *Changing the curriculum / our training programme to include this subject has been worthwhile.*

138

PRESENTATION

This is a useful way of giving the group a chunk of information about the particular theme which they are exploring. It can be delivered by an individual or a small group using Powerpoint, an overhead projector, a flipchart, a whiteboard, etc. However, it is important:

• to enable group members to understand the relevance of the input and how it fits in with what they are doing in the programme as a whole;

• to make sure that the input fits within group members' concentration spans (for example, depending on the time of day, group age, energy levels, etc.);

• that you do not overload people with too much information at a time.

With this in mind, set yourself a time limit, and stick to it.

Breaking up the input with discussion and other activities may help with this. In addition, bear in mind that often people learn and remember most effectively by 'doing': a more useful way of working may be to set small groups the task of finding out about aspects of the particular theme, and for each of them to give a presentation to the large group. As well as learning about the theme, they will also be developing other investigative, thinking and communication skills.

Learning Pyramid [7]

LECTURE — *5%*

READING — *10%*

AUDIO-VISUAL — *20%*

DEMONSTRATION — *30%*

DISCUSSION GROUP — *50%*

PRACTICE BY DOING — *75%*

TEACH OTHER / IMMEDIATE USE OF LEARNING — *90%*
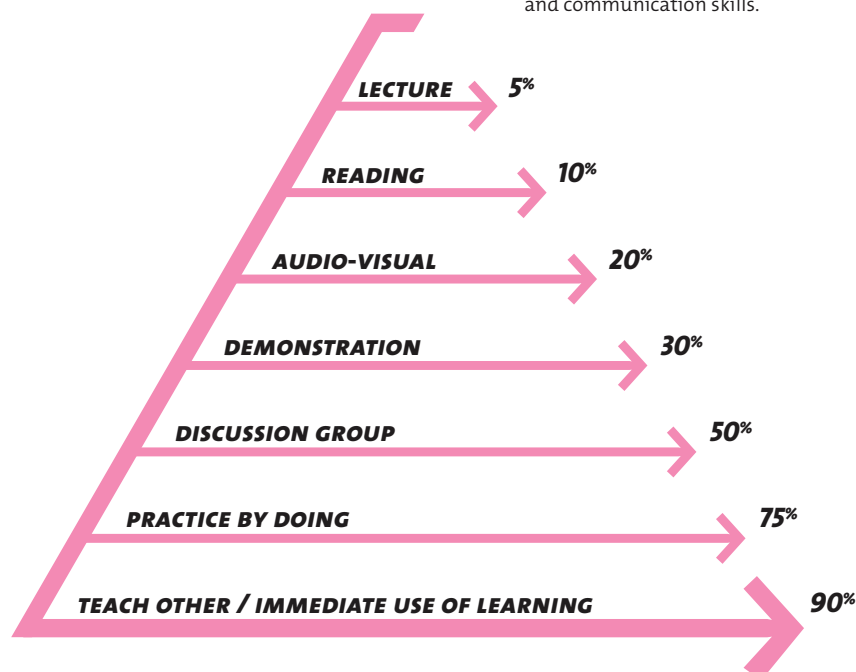
139

QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION

This allows the group(s) to focus on a particular theme through the structure of questions and answers, rather than through open discussion. The questions may be addressed to the facilitator, to an individual group member or to a particular small group within the group. This may be in response to a presentation, in the light of the specific experience or expertise a group member is known to have, etc. It is essential to check that the individual or small group is comfortable with being the focus of questions and is happy to have a go at answering them. As the facilitator, it is also important to know when to end such a session, perhaps because enough time has been given to it or because the person fielding the questions seems to have had enough. One way of doing this is to check with her / him now and again, for example, by asking, 'Would you like to leave it there, or are you OK to take a couple more questions?' Remind the questioners to keep their questions focused and the responder to keep her / his answers succinct. It is always important to work within the context of the group contract, so that both questioning and answering are respectful, even when challenging someone else's perspective.

SCENARIOS AND STORIES

Particular scenarios can often give a context for understanding life implications that might otherwise seem theoretical or irrelevant. A fictional story can give groups a fantasy space in which to safely explore a theme within their own life context. There are many excellent children's stories that can be used in this way, including with adults. Alternatively, you can create your own scenario or story to suit the situation. Scenarios and stories in picture or video / DVD form are also useful.

In order to develop an understanding of the theme and to relate it back to 'real life', some ways of using scenarios and stories include:

- considering the situation / theme from the perspective of different characters;

- developing alternative endings or outcomes;

- thinking about what might have been happening just before the story / scenario;

- thinking up questions you would like to ask particular characters, and their possible answers;

- examining the possible positive and negative ways characters relate to and interact with each other, and considering alternatives;

- considering where I would put myself in the scenario / story? What would I have done the same / differently?

It can be valuable to use fairy tales and to look at the situation from the perspective of different characters, not just the 'hero / heroine', for example, the wolf in Little Red Riding Hood, the ugly sisters in Cinderella.

Stories for exploring identity:
- *Inkpen, M. (1996), Nothing, London, Hodder Children's Books.*

Stories for exploring fear and conflict:
- *Long Neck and Thunder Foot, London, Puffin, Piers, H. / Foreman, M. (illustrated) (1984);*

- *For further examples, see CCEA (2002), Primary Values, Belfast, CCEA.*

Scenarios are often developed directly or indirectly from the facilitator's or group members' own experiences. Telling your own story can be an important part of understanding your experiences, just as listening to others' 'real life' stories can provide a way of learning from theirs. The very experience of being heard can be hugely affirming.

140

TELLING OUR OWN STORY: LIFELINES

This exercise allows individuals to tell their own story based on key events in their lives to date. It allows us to see our lives differently: pictorially and in positives and negatives. You can do it in different ways – you could take it from birth until now, from age 15 until now, over the past year, etc.

Give participants a large sheet of paper and pens / crayons, ask them to find a space on their own and to work for 15 – 30 minutes (depending on the group). They can illustrate their 'line' using words, pictures, symbols, newspaper / magazine cuttings, etc.

Participants can then share their Lifeline with a partner or in a small group. Make sure that you allow time for everyone in the group to tell their story. The Lifelines can also be displayed, if participants are happy with this. Be aware that Lifelines can be emotive and contain very personal information, so always work within the contract framework and ensure that people know that they choose what they want to illustrate and share with others.

You might want to give the group some specific guidelines to work with, for example, 'a time ...':

- *I felt proud*
- *I felt happy*
- *I felt embarrassed*
- *I became aware of difference*
- *I felt aware of belonging*
- *I felt (un)fairly treated*
- *I was aware of divisions in Northern Ireland*
- *I was aware of global conflict*

These possibilities can also be explored through drama, writing and arts-based activities.

Drama-based Activities

ROLE-PLAY

Role-play can be an exciting technique where you encourage people to play the role of another person or indeed a position they themselves have previously experienced. It can also be valuable for people to take on a role they have not previously experienced, particularly a role reversal, for example where they take on the role of someone they have different views from or with whom they have been in conflict. They will take up this role for a certain period of time (to be specified at the start of the role-play) and should be encouraged to play this role to the best of their ability. You could introduce the concept of role-play by outlining the different roles you undertake in every day life, for example, son, daughter, father, mother, teacher, pupil, caretaker, governor, tutor, etc.

You can prepare for role-play in advance by preparing role cards, but be conscious not to make them over-complicated so that players do not become over-anxious about trying to remember everything. It is important that you set realistic boundaries, and the scene for the role-play so that everyone understands what is happening.

Role-play can encourage people to appreciate that our behaviour, feelings and self-image may vary depending on the role we are playing. We can also develop self-confidence through an increased awareness of our capacity to cope with different roles. There is no script for role-plays and you need to be prepared for the unexpected, for example:

- *emotional issues emerging;*
- *players drying up;*
- *the need to challenge negative stereotypes.*

After the role-play, allow as much time for follow-up as for the role-play itself. Feelings that arise during role-play are very real and should not be discounted. Give players time to come

out of their role and talk about their feelings now and those during the role-play. This can be done in small groups or in the large group.

Simple 'de-roling' techniques enable people to leave their roles and become themselves again. Explain that the role-play is over and get them to think of who they are, for example, turning to the next person and saying their name and favourite football team / food / music etc. It is important to create time so that there is a definite break for the group to debrief – how did they feel, what did they learn, linking the role-play to real life situations, etc.

NB Some people feel deep anxiety about 'role-play'. It is always important to be clear about what is involved, that no fantastic acting skills are required and that this, as with everything else, takes place within a supportive, respectful space. There is a big difference between being asked to role-play a particular conversation with a partner while everyone else is doing the same, and being asked to do a role-play in front of the rest of the group which they will then discuss afterwards. You need to consider:

- that it is appropriate to give people a choice as to whether or how they participate;

- giving people time to think about the role-play before they act it out;

- asking for volunteers when it is for role-play in front of the large group;

- approaching people to allow them to prepare in advance of the session if it will help them to feel more confident;

- giving people the option of taking on an observation and feedback role;

- building up to role-play by doing other, lower key drama-based activities first.

USING PUPPETS AND MASKS

Puppets and masks allow people to take on roles within a discussion or drama, but often also give them confidence to say things or to explore things which they might not do while 'being themselves'. On a basic level, shy children can use a puppet to speak through, where they might not speak within the group by themselves. On another level, group members can express feelings, thoughts, concerns, etc. that the puppet or mask persona is experiencing where they might not have said it directly about themselves. Using puppets to act out stories and scenarios is a valuable experience in itself, and can also be a way into group members engaging in role-play.

The experience of actually making the puppets or masks and of writing stories / scenarios can also be an extremely useful part of the process.

Other Arts-based Activities [8]

As with drama-based activities, these can be very effective with group members who are less confident about their verbal communication and literacy skills. They:

- encourage a range of other creative skills;

- can provide an important outlet for the expression of emotions;

- enable people to express things that they might not be able to put into words.

As with drama, it is important to allay people's concerns by emphasising that we all have creativity within us, and it is not about being good or bad at art, music, etc. as we may have previously been told. Encourage people to consider the importance of the process and learning rather than the product.

Before moving into the main activities, it may be useful to do a couple of short introductory

142

activities to help build people's confidence.
For example:

• Ask people to use only marks or lines
(no pictures, symbols or letters) on a page to
represent different feelings.

• Ask people to think about which colour /
shape they associate with different feelings,
places, experiences, etc., for example, 'think
of a colour which represents ...':

• *how you see the world;*
• *your motivation;*
• *how you see yourself.*

• Give people a piece of clay and ask them
to simply feel it in their hands with their eyes
closed. Keeping their eyes closed, they could
then go on to make something (anything at
all, it does not have to be complicated!) of
their choice.

• Ask people to sit in silence for two to
three minutes and to listen to the sounds
which they can hear around them.

• Develop a simple clapping rhythm within
the circle, possibly beginning with everyone
clapping once, passing the clap around the
circle. As the group becomes confident,
divide people into several small groups with
different rhythms.

• Play a piece of music (any style!) and ask
participants to write / draw what the music
meant to them, the feelings it raised or what
they thought about.

COLLAGE

Participants spend approximately 45 minutes
searching through old magazines and
newspapers cutting out relevant material
relating to the subject of the collage. It is a
good idea to write up about four relevant
headings as a guide to the content of
collages. These headings will not restrict the
contents of the collage as participants soon
become engrossed and are merely a support
to get everyone started. Upon completion of
their collages participants / small groups
display them around the room. Each person /
group in turn explains their collage to the
others with time allocated to ask questions,
discuss and affirm each collage.

Collage Headings Example: Conflict

• *Words and images associated with conflict*
• *Personally, locally, globally*
• *Resolving conflict: the ideal and the reality*
• *Consequences of conflict:*
  for example, intimidation, refugees,
  famine, unemployment, etc.

Group members often feel great pride in their
collage, and the depth of content displayed
can be surprising. For this reason it is
important that collages, as with all creative
work, are treated with a certain amount of
reverence – allowing them to stay on display
for a period of time, or be taken home afterwards.
It is important to create a safe space and this
means that there are no spectators in this
activity, including the facilitator. You and the
group will benefit greatly from your
participation – you might even be surprised
by what you learn about yourself!

143

ART SPIRAL

Lay out a large spiral of paper / card, spread widely enough so that group members can access different parts on which to work. Provide crayons, paints and pens.

Everyone, including the facilitator, selects a spot on the spiral and in the space they have chosen, draws / paints something which represents their thoughts in response to the question. You may want to encourage them not to use words in their art, and you may also want to ask everyone to work in silence. After a time (for example, ten minutes), ask them to find another space, and respond to a follow-on question. This can be repeated as is appropriate and according to space on the spiral.

Sample questions could include:

- *How would you represent important aspects of your past?*
- *How would you represent important aspects of your present?*
- *What are your hopes for the future?*

Afterwards, allow time to stand back and look at the spiral, walking around to see other people's contributions. Follow this by de-briefing as a group, talking about what people can see on the spiral or what they chose personally to depict, and considering the process of working together. For example:

- How did people feel if someone used 'their' space and developed or added to their work?

- How did it feel to work in silence?

- How comfortable were they with an art-based activity? When had they last done something like this?

144

Writing-based Activities

These activities are useful because they require people to articulate their thoughts and feelings and, therefore, help to build all kinds of literacy, including emotional literacy. It is important to be aware of literacy levels within the group. Using only or mostly writing-based activities can reduce the opportunities for participation, contribution and learning for those who are not confident about their literacy. At worst, they may opt out of activities or stop coming to the group altogether.

REPORTAGE

A similar exercise to the collage, where individuals / small groups are asked to design a news report for a specific communication medium such as radio, television, newspaper or the internet to explain the work they have been doing. They should consider to whom the report is to be made available. The report could include:

- the value of the work, including both positive and negative points;

- what they have learnt and what action needs to be taken;

- interviews with people who have views on the issue in question;

- examples of written or artwork;

- celebration of the group, the learning, etc.;

- future plans.

WORKSHEET

Using worksheets individually, in pairs or small groups can help to focus people's thinking because they need to express it clearly in writing and often in response to particular questions. It can be limiting, however, if the questions are not open enough, if there is no opportunity to share their learning and depending on the size of the sheet. (For sample worksheets, see end of section.)

SILENT PERSONAL REFLECTION AND JOURNALS

It is important that people have the opportunity to develop skills of personal reflection and to be comfortable with themselves. There will also be those within the group who will learn most effectively in this way. It is useful to develop silent reflection when you want people to give a considered response within a discussion rather than simply their first reaction.

Similarly, using a journal can help to focus thoughts and reflections, whether it is done through writing, drawing or a combination of the two. A journal also allows people to reflect back on their learning over a period of time. This provides useful reminders and can be hugely affirming as they see what they have learnt, the skills they have developed, etc. To help give a sense of the purpose of journals when working with children, Jenny Mosley calls them 'Think Books',[9] and this, or a similar name may be more appropriate for your particular group.

It is crucial that before people begin using journals there is a very clear understanding as to whether they are totally personal or whether they will be shared with the facilitator and / or the group. People are likely to record very different things depending on who is going to see them. Where the facilitator is going to have access to them, it may be appropriate to write responsive comments which will give affirmation, assist reflection and learning, etc. However, again, it needs to be made clear that this is going to happen at the start.

9 Mosley, J. (2000), Quality Circle Time in the Primary Classroom, Wisbech, LDA.

145

THINK, WRITE, SHARE

This allows people time to think and reflect, to focus their thoughts in writing or in a picture / symbols and then to share them with a partner or group. It is especially useful for people who may feel 'put on the spot' when an instant response is expected from them. A worksheet could be used as the starting point for this.

Group Tasks and Challenges [10]

These could include many of the activities outlined above and many of the games described in Section Five (Using Games). There is a valuable group-building purpose within such activities, and they can also be arranged to suit the particular theme of the programme / session. Setting the group a shared task or challenge, for example, to solve a problem together, to make something together, to undertake a community-based project, to investigate and respond to a particular social or global issue, etc. is a useful way of embedding learning. A good example of this is the action component within Local and Global Citizenship.[11] As with the other practical activities, this can be emphasised by debriefing questions.

10 Craig, C. et al. (2003), Different Tracks – Experiential Learning: A Practical Guide for Community Relations Work, Belfast, Corrymeela Community.

11 CCEA (2003), Local and Global Citizenship: A Resource for Post-Primary Schools, Belfast, CCEA.

146

SAMPLE DE-BRIEFING QUESTIONS:

- Did your group worked well together?

- Did your group elect a leader?

- Did a leader emerge?

- Was there any attempt at planning how to perform the various tasks?

- Was enough time spent on planning the tasks? Did this save time later?

- How did the group operate as a team?

- Was there conflict, differences of opinion, etc.?

- What skills did you need to use?

- Did anyone monitor the time available?

- Did everyone understand what was going on and what was expected of them?

- Did different personalities emerge, for example, analyser, peacemaker, etc.?

- Were the later tasks better organised by the group than the earlier ones?

- What kind of atmosphere was there?

- Did you use the time between tasks to review progress and plan improvement?

- Was everyone involved? How were the tasks shared out?

- Did the task get so complicated / disorganised that it had to be started again?

- List four strengths your group demonstrated.

- Did your approach have any weaknesses?

- What would you do differently if you could do the task again?

Questions for Reflection

Have I chosen a wide enough and appropriate range of ways of working and activities for this particular group and programme?

Are there ways of working which would be new to me, but that I would like to try? Where can I gain experience or get support for doing this?

Are there ways of working that I feel wary about? Would it help to see them in action, or experience them as a participant? How can I do this?

Is there someone else with particular skills who could work with me for specific activities? (Make sure that it's appropriate – having told the group that they do not need to be drama or art experts, it may undermine that to bring one in!)

12 Adapted from Benson, J. (1997), Working More Creatively with Groups, London, Routledge.

147

DEVELOPING PROGRAMMES FOR CHILDREN,
YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS

Worksheet:
Similarities and Differences

Three things about me which are the same as everyone else in the room:

- _____
- _____
- _____

Three things about me that I feel make me different from everyone else in the room:

- _____
- _____
- _____

Five things which are the same as some other people in the room:

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

Three qualities that I feel other people in the room have that I do not have:

- _____
- _____
- _____

148

📄

Worksheet:
Heritage and Identity

Where did I live when I was growing up?

What traditions run
through my family?
- Musical?
- Sporting?
- Trades?
- Land?
- Professional?
- Political?
- Religious?

What are Sundays like in my home?

What newspapers does my family buy?

What is my earliest memory of
my religious identity / background?

What were the big issues for me
growing up in Northern Ireland?

What is
my earliest
memory
of conflict
in Northern
Ireland?

What do I like / dislike about
belonging to my community of origin?

What are the big occasions
in the year for my family?

Who are my heroes / respected figures in
politics, the media, religious settings, etc.?

5.7
Practical Preparation for Groupwork

Although 'safe space' is about far more than the physical surroundings, these and other practical considerations will play an important part, and need to be considered by the facilitator within the overall planning. Very basic things will affect people's level of comfort, sense of safety and, therefore, their ability and willingness to participate.

THE PHYSICAL SETTING

For a class group working on their own, the best place to do the work will probably be their own classroom as this is likely to be the place in the school where they feel most at home. This also recognises that the work is integrated within the life of the classroom and is not something additional or exceptional. In a similar way, a staff team might find their staffroom the most appropriate place for this kind of work. On the other hand, if the staffroom is really only, or is perceived to be only, the 'teachers' room', this might not be the appropriate place for work involving the whole school staff team.

It is important to bear in mind that some rooms, such as a science laboratory, have fixed workspaces and it may not be possible to use these rooms for groupwork. Some aspects of groupwork may still be possible with a bit of creativity and compromise, for example, partner work and work in small groups with feedback to the large group, even though not in a circle.

Setting up a circle for group discussion:
- *Does a circle need to be set up and put away for each session?*
- *Does everyone, including the facilitator, have the same seating?*
- *Does everyone has eye contact?*
- *Do I need a 'talking object' for discussions?*

Practicalities:
Have I checked with group members that:
- *everyone has a seat / space (and a seat / space is left for anyone you are expecting to arrive late)?*
- *they are warm enough / not too warm?*
- *the lighting is OK (for example, no one is being blinded by sunlight)?*
- *everyone can see and hear everyone else?*
- *there is a good balance between giving people their 'personal space' and a sense of actually being together as a group?*
- *possibilities of interruption are minimised (for example, all mobile phones are switched off, the facilitator is aware at the start of anyone who needs to leave early)?*

Other considerations:
- Is there sufficient space for any games or other activities I am planning?

- Are there any health and safety implications?

- Do I need a sign on the door so that the session will not be interrupted?

- Is there the possibility of another room if the usual workplace is not suitable?

- If the room has limitations, what are the possibilities I could still creatively develop, or adaptions I could make?

Where two or more groups from within a school or from different schools are meeting together, the co-ordinators / facilitators will need to discuss together the most appropriate place to meet.

- How many people (including facilitators / leaders) will be involved?

- Will it be possible to work in one circle, or will it need to be split up into smaller groups?

- If working in more than one group, will there need to be feedback to the whole group at points during or at the end of the session?

- What space will be needed for this – more than one room?

- What will be the most appropriate venue (in one school or external)?

- Is there sufficient space for any games or activities which we are planning?

- Have we checked out any health and safety implications?

- Have we organised consent forms for children / young people who are going to a venue other than their own school?

NB. For example: An assembly hall or gym may provide plenty of space for games and circles, but some group members may feel overwhelmed by such a big space or feel that their voice is too exposed if they express a personal view, and it can be 'echo-y' and harder to hear people.

Weighing up the pros and cons is important!

THE TIME AVAILABLE

For individual sessions, this is likely to be more flexible within a primary school than within a post-primary school context, but in both cases the balances between flexibility and other curriculum demands need to be maintained. The bell ringing for the next class / break / end of school is usually a non-negotiable limit, and it is crucial that the programme has reached an appropriate point of closure before this happens.

Aspects such as starting and finishing on time can assist children, young people and adults to see that the work is purposeful and planned, and that they and their time are valued. If group members are late for the start of a session, it is important to respond to this appropriately and respectfully. If they are late for no clear reason, it may be because they do not perceive the session to be a good use of their time, and it may be necessary to clarify the session's purpose, its relevance to them and the contribution which they can make for the benefit of the group as a whole.

151

Whether planning an individual lesson, a module / series of lessons or a development / training programme for adults, it will be important to think about how much time is needed for the different aspects of:

- *introduction;*
- *relationship and trust building;*
- *exploration of the themes;*
- *evaluation and closure.*

The appropriate depth to which the discussions can be taken will depend in part on the time available to ensure that each of the introductory and ending steps is sufficiently developed. Within a longer session, and particularly if the programme / process is very in-depth or emotive, time will also need to be allocated for breaks.

- What time is available for the overall programme / module?

- What time is available for each session?

- When is the best time within the day / week for a regular session?

- How can the programme purpose best be achieved within the time available?

- What size is the group? (This will affect how long it takes to do different exercises.)

- How long is it appropriate to spend on different activities or discussions?
(This may depend on the ages, abilities, and concentration skills within the group.)

- Have I allowed sufficient time for introductory activities (for example, sharing purpose and plan for the session, introductory / ice-breaker game, re-visiting contract, etc.) and for evaluation and closure?

- Have I allowed time for appropriate breaks (including meals!)?

- Have I considered how I will respond if people are late for no clear reason?

152

RESOURCES

There are many resources available which can support this kind of work, outlining exercises, games and activities. Such resources will enable more creative programme planning and will support the facilitator in introducing a range of learning opportunities. It is important, however, that facilitators thoroughly familiarise themselves with a particular activity before introducing it to a group, paying particular attention to its appropriateness for that group and the programme in which they are participating.

People are also an important resource, not least the group members themselves, who may have different skills and activity ideas to share. Provided it does not contravene group needs or disrupt the group in other ways, there may be times when it is useful to:

- work with a co-facilitator, see Co-facilitation: Working Together (Section Three);

- invite someone in to lead a session / programme because of their particular experiences or expertise;

- invite other members of the school or local community to participate in or lead a session / programme;

- invite a colleague, tutor, etc. to participate in the group to support you in reflecting on your own learning and skills development.

- What resources are available to me?

- Which resources might be useful for this particular group and programme?

- Do I feel confident leading this exercise?

- How will I evaluate its effectiveness?

- Do I have a resource budget?

- Do I need any support in facilitating this programme?

- Is there someone who could co-facilitate or lead a particular session?

- Is there someone who could help me reflect on my practice?

- Is it possible to bring in someone external?
- *Is there money available for this if needed?*
- *Have they completed any necessary Child Protection documentation?*

153

5.8
Developing a Programme

As with all other areas of session planning, this work needs to have a clear **Purpose** and intended **Learning Outcomes** (for individuals, the group as a whole, yourself as the facilitator). The biggest challenge may be that the facilitator is less in control of the process than s/he might be in other areas of their work.

There are a number of reasons for this:

• The material for the work is drawn largely from the life experiences of group members and is dependent to a significant extent on what they choose to bring to the process.

• A commitment to a democratic way of working means that the facilitator does not come to the process as an expert with knowledge to share with the group members. While maintaining a co-ordination role, the facilitator is also a listener and a learner, recognising what each of the children, young people and / or adults brings to the group.

• There is an emphasis on the process itself, rather than on completing a specific task. This requires a high degree of flexibility on the part of the facilitator and a strong sensitivity to the needs and feelings within the group.

Given these circumstances, it is highly appropriate to involve the members in planning as they are the 'experts' on their own life story and situation, and know which issues are of interest and relevance to them.

All of these factors may challenge the facilitator's sense of safety. Feeling reasonably confident about her / his personal preparation, her / his facilitation skills and having a positive relationship with her / his group members will help to ensure that s/he feels equipped for her / his facilitation role. The consequences have the potential to be hugely dynamic and rewarding!

Group members will also feel safer and better able to participate fully if the programme:

- *has a clear purpose they are able to buy into;*
- *is genuinely relevant;*
- *provides a range of learning opportunities which match their different learning styles;*
- *is appropriate for their age group, ability range, etc. and builds from the level of previous experience.*

See Building a Positive Learning Environment: Using Groupwork and Facilitation (Section Three) and Creating Safe Space (Section Five).

Developing Learning Outcomes

The facilitator needs to consider in advance how s/he will reflect on and evaluate both individual sessions and the overall programme. Establishing the purpose of the work and the intended learning outcomes means that these can be used as indicators to measure the learning which takes place.

You will need to consider learning outcomes in relation to aspects such as:

- *factual knowledge;*
- *skills;*
- *understanding;*
- *relationships / interactions;*
- *attitudes and behaviour;*
- *making connections*
  i.e. will group members be able to understand that the learning is relevant and transferable to other settings and experiences?

Gathering evidence of learning will enable everyone to see where learning has taken place, to value the work and to feel confident that it is an important use of their time.

154

823

For more information on monitoring and evaluation, see Developing a Model for Self-evaluation (Section Six).

Once the purpose and intended learning outcomes of the programme and individual sessions are set, you can begin to look at which ways of working and specific activities will be most likely to ensure that these are met and that learning actually takes place. Both within individual sessions and across whole programmes, there needs to be a sense of appropriate **progression** and **development**. This means that there needs to be:

- *a sense of continuity and connection between each activity and session;*
- *a structure of activities which allows each new level of learning to be built on further;*
- *opportunities along the way to re-visit and reinforce key learning points.*

It is important, therefore, to get a good balance between keeping the process moving and trying to ensure that key learning is in place before moving on to the next stage.

Common Mistakes [12]

- There is a failure to base the programme on identified individual or group (learning) needs.

- A failure to link the programme objectives to the group's hopes and expectations.

- The programme is too rigid, for example, because of over-planning, failure to allow for spontaneous or unexpected incidents.

- There is an inability to use unexpected incidents to develop programme objectives or to take an entirely new course where this might be appropriate.

- There is not enough balance between individual and group needs, and the group's task requirements.

- The programme is aimed above or below the capabilities and potential of group members, leading to frustration, boredom, competition, etc.

- The programme is unimaginative, repetitive, unstimulating or inappropriate.

- There is too much focus on completing tasks / activities at the expense of attending to and learning from the process which is happening within the group.

- There is a failure to create clarity for group members in relation to the programme and its purpose.

- There is a failure to monitor and evaluate the programme as a way of fine-tuning or even redesigning it if necessary.

12 Adapted from Benson, J. (1997), Working More Creatively with Groups, London, Routledge.

155

5·9
If Things 'Go Wrong'

Given the nature of groupwork and all of the relationships and interactions within it, there is always the possibility that the programme will not go as originally planned. There can be all kinds of reasons for this, and many of these can be turned into constructive learning experiences in themselves. Some of them will be very minor and / or may be immediately positive while others may prove more challenging. There are a few basic foundations, explored in more detail elsewhere in the resource, which will enable the facilitator to respond in ways which will minimise any disruption or anxiety within the group.

These include:

- *a respectful and consistent facilitation style;*
- *taking sufficient time at the beginning of a programme to establish good relations and clear ground rules within the group;*
- *ensuring that the group are able to understand and engage positively with the purpose of the programme;*
- *flexibility in your programme – to suit the group and the circumstances;*
- *taking sufficient time along the way to reflect and evaluate;*
- *ensuring that support structures are in place for the facilitator and for group members.*

The situations which arise will be different in each unique group and will require appropriate responses. They may include:

- *a ground rule being broken;*
- *different forms of challenging behaviour;*
- *people expressing strong emotions;*
- *the formation of subgroups or cliques;*
- *rebellion or refusal to engage;*

PREPARATION QUESTIONS

Purpose and Learning Outcomes:
- *What is the purpose of the programme?*
- *What are the intended learning outcomes for the programme / module?*
- *What are the intended learning outcomes for the session?*
- *How will learning outcomes, and the whole programme, be monitored and evaluated?*

Involving Group Members:
- *How can group members be involved in programme design and planning?*
- *How can group members be involved in programme monitoring and evaluation?*

Practical Considerations:
See previous checklists on physical setting, time and resources.

- *Bearing all of the above in mind, what will be the most appropriate ways of working and specific activities to use?*

Maximising Learning:
How can I maximise the learning opportunities for group members through:

- *the range of activities offered;*
- *repetition of key themes;*
- *re-visiting key themes using different types of activities;*
- *making clear connections with other learning environments and life experiences?*

- *'red herrings' which take the group off on irrelevant tangents (NB. sometimes they may not be 'red herrings' at all, but may be indicating something which is important within the group);*
- *the group needing to make an important decision and struggling to do so;*
- *a mismatch between the programme content and the group (for example, too theoretical, pitched at an inappropriate level, a sense of irrelevance, etc.);*
- *avoidance or denial of particular issues;*
- *conflict within the group.*

Starting Points for Responding

DON'T PANIC!

- If you have attended to the basic principles outlined above, you already have all the tools in place that you need to respond to whatever situations arise.

- Has something really 'gone wrong' or is there something in particular that is triggering your own anxieties? If possible, check this out with a co-facilitator or colleague. Positive learning may well be occurring within the group.

TAKE YOUR TIME IN RESPONDING

- Provided the physical safety of group members and yourself is assured, there is no need to rush to respond.

- Give yourself time to observe what is going on within the group and to ask the group what they think is happening.

- Consider whether this is something which needs an immediate response, whether it is something that can be worked out through the group's ongoing activities and discussions, or a combination of the two.

DON'T ASSUME THINGS HAVE GONE WRONG

- Disruption to your carefully planned programme may not be a disaster! In fact, it may be a useful indication of immediate needs within the group which need to be explored and addressed before they will be able to move on.

- It may indicate gaps within your programme which the group feel or demonstrate are important (for example, the need for more skills development, significant aspects which had not occurred to you, relational issues which have been preventing the group from working effectively together).

CONSIDER THE POSSIBLE CAUSES

- Do not assume that whatever has happened is the responsibility of a perceived 'troublemaker' who 'always' disrupts things / leads others astray.

- Consider carefully what the genuine and practical causes for the situation may be – again, ask the group what they think. Bear in mind that things going on outside the group (within an individual's circumstances, in a peer group, another class, the wider school, the community, etc.) may be impacting on what is happening within the group.

- If there are individuals who you believe carry particular responsibility for what has happened or who have been particularly affected, consider where and when the appropriate place to respond is. It is important to keep the whole group appropriately informed.

157

Strategies for Responding

Some specific responses to the situations suggested above are outlined in other sections in the pack. However, some general strategies which may be useful include:

DON'T AUTOMATICALLY BLAME YOURSELF

- Unforeseen circumstances can arise within any group, and sometimes, because of your knowledge of a group, you can be aware that you are taking some level of risk in introducing the next planned topic.

- Take time to reflect with a supportive colleague, with your teacher tutor, or in supervision if it is available, so that you can consider all of the factors involved and use what has happened as a situation to learn from.

TIME OUT:
for the group and for yourself. A quick break can give people a bit of space, time to re-gain perspective to reflect and think through options.

RE-VISIT THE CONTRACT / GROUND RULES:
if the issues emerging are around behaviour or relations within the group, it will be important to look again at the ground rules, to make sure that everyone is clear about their purpose and meaning. This may be sufficient to address the issue, or it may become appropriate to use the agreed warning and sanctions system.

SHARE RESPONSIBILITY WITH THE GROUP

- Groupwork is a democratic process, and it is the facilitator's task to enable the group to learn and develop.

- Supporting group members to explore, and respond to difficulties is a key part of the facilitator's role. If the process is well facilitated, group members will be enabled to develop in a whole range of skills including, for example, self-reflection, self-expression, active listening, empathy, other aspects of emotional literacy, problem-solving, conflict resolution, etc.

- As suggested above, group members may well have the answers you are looking for as you yourself think about how to respond!

CHANGE THE PROGRAMME:
while recognising that there may be curriculum restraints, it may be useful to alter the learning methods, or even the actual content. Pushing on with your original plan will be futile if no learning is going to take place.

RE-VISIT EARLIER STAGES OF THE PROGRAMME:
have the difficulties emerged because learning from an earlier stage of the programme has not yet been assimilated? Or because there has not been sufficient development of particular skills?

WORK WITH A CO-FACILITATOR:
if it is appropriate and possible at this stage within your programme, it may be useful to invite someone to co-facilitate with you for the next session(s).

158

827

USE AN EXTERNAL FACILITATOR:
if you feel that you are too involved in what is going on, it may be useful and appropriate to ask an external facilitator to explore the issues with the group, with you also participating. This may be particularly useful if there is a conflict which needs to be mediated.

SUPPORT STRUCTURES FOR GROUP MEMBERS:
bearing in mind that this kind of groupwork is not about counselling or therapy, occasionally it may be appropriate to encourage or enable individuals to receive this kind of support elsewhere. Equally, if Child Protection issues emerge, it is essential to follow through the appropriate procedures for responding to these.

REVIEW AND EVALUATE THOROUGHLY:
take time to thoroughly reflect on and evaluate what has happened, and build this into your planning for future sessions. Use your own support structures to help you to reflect, to check out your ideas and to obtain other perspectives and insights.

Questions for Reflection

What are my fears as to things that could 'go wrong' with this group and this programme?

What positive learning for myself and for the group could come out of such situations?

Is there anyone in this group I might have a tendency to scapegoat? Why?

Have I thoroughly planned and prepared for the work?

Have I allowed sufficient time for building relationships establishing ground rules, developing skills, etc.?

Is there a clear and appropriate rewards, warnings and sanctions system?

Am I prepared and confident to be flexible with the programme?

Have I some alternative possibilities ready?

What support is available to help me reflect, evaluate and plan for the next session?

159

829
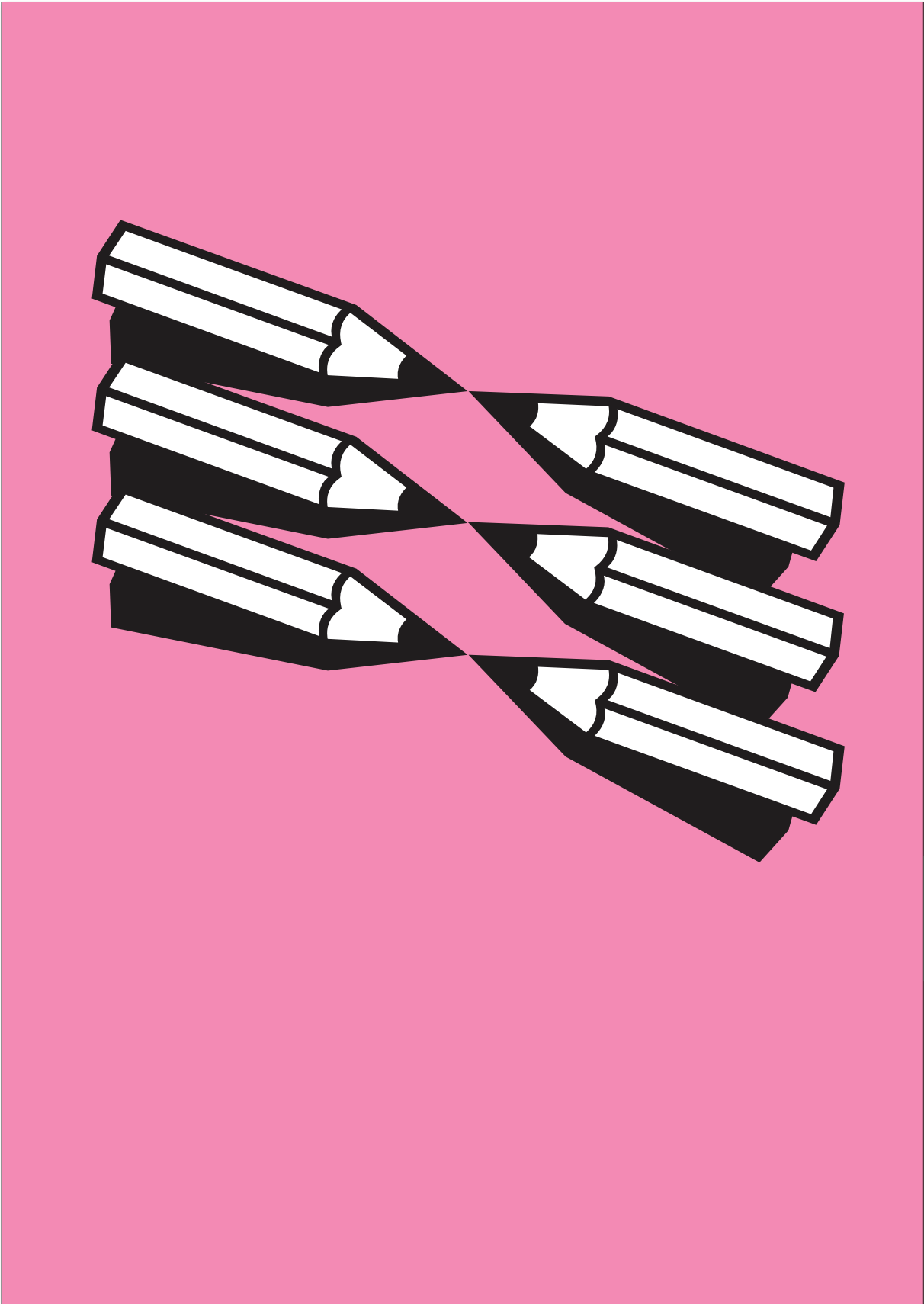
Developing a Model for Self-evaluation

People talking without speaking

People hearing without listening ...

'Fools,' said I, 'You do not know

Silence like a cancer grows.'

LYRICS FROM: SIMON, P. (1964), SOUNDS OF SILENCE.

developing a model for self-evaluation

6.0

To evaluate means to collect information about the results of an action and set this against predetermined goals in order to judge the value of the results. The evaluation allows you to maintain, to change or to suspend, justifiably, a defined plan. In this way it supports you to decide the direction you need to go and the best way to get there.

A simple word 'Evaluation':
- *What for?*
- *When? In which circumstances?*
- *With whom?*
- *How to do it?*

The Self-evaluating School [1]

Self-evaluation is a process through which an individual teacher, groups of staff, the staff as a whole and senior management can:

- *reflect on their current practice;*
- *identify and celebrate the school's strengths;*
- *identify and address areas for improvement in their work;*
- *engage in personal and shared professional development;*
- *focus on improving the quality of learning and teaching.*

The process of self-evaluation:

- is ongoing and sharply-focused, and involves monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of the existing provision and the pupils' achievements;

- recognises the need for the staff and governors to have a clear and agreed view of the school's current stage of development and through school development planning, to identify priorities which will have a positive effect on learning and teaching;

- informs and influences classroom practice and the quality of learning and teaching, and promotes development and improvement;

- requires staff to evaluate their work critically, reflect on the extent to which expectations are being realised in the work of the school, and establish a clear vision and future direction for the school.

This process requires a climate where all involved are encouraged to be open about their work, evaluate and where necessary improve their own performance.

163

6.1
Reviewing

In this context, reviewing is understood as a process of reflecting, asking questions and making learning connections, which is informal and integrated into the fabric of how you work.

Evaluation takes place when this process is formalised and broadened to include aspects such as structures, programme content, delivery style, numbers participating, etc.

Learning does not take place in a vacuum, but in the context of everyday life. Optimum learning is achieved when it is connected. For example, the Northern Ireland Curriculum supports the links between subject areas / themes, although this requires further integration as children / young people also need support in understanding the links between different aspects of learning. Similarly, adults need to see the relevance of any training they receive, to the work which they are required to do or the responsibilities which they carry.

Reviewing is about the link between experience and learning. Just as we need experience in order to learn, we need to use our knowledge to plan our actions and experiences.

REVIEWING INVOLVES FOUR BASIC PROCESSES:

1 Reflection
- *understanding what happened and why;*
- *judging progress in terms of the objectives within the learning programme;*
- *making connections for ourselves;*
- *relating experience gained through the learning programme and existing knowledge.*

2 Making Connections
Personal growth can be viewed as making new connections in any of several directions:

- *upward to achieve one's full potential;*
- *outward to contact and encounter others;*
- *inward to increase our awareness of who we are and what we want, need, sense and feel.*

Some activities have value in their own right, and do not depend on the kinds of connections that are made with other experiences.

We continually come to know ourselves and our worlds by making connections between past, present and future. Threads and themes help us to draw separate experiences together into stories about ourselves and who we are. This can be restricted if, for example:

- people's development is held back by others around them who will not let them change or grow up;

- whatever they do gets explained by themselves or by others in terms of labels from the past.

3 Planning
The experience and learning gained through activities is used to plan what happens next in the programme.

164

832

4 Learning Transfer

This is a process of continuous development, which focuses on identifying new knowledge, understanding and skills and thinking about how these can be used in current or future situations.

Questions for Reflection

Do I regularly consider my teaching with a view to identifying aspects that can be usefully developed?

Do I make use of systematic evaluation methods of collecting data about my current practice that may be helpful?

What do I do about what I have learned?

6.2
Assessment as Evaluation

Assessment is an integral part of the learning process through which teachers / trainers build a comprehensive picture of the progress and learning needs of each child, young person or adult in order to plan future work and improve learning. Improvement in learning through assessment is enhanced by:

- the active involvement of children, young people and adults in their learning, including:
  - *sharing learning intentions with children, young people and adults;*
  - *raising their awareness of the skills and knowledge that are being developed;*
  - *developing their awareness of strategies which they employ in their own learning;*

- the provision of effective feedback to children, young people and adults (recognising the profound influence this can have on motivation and self-esteem, both of which are crucial influences on learning) and creating circumstances whereby everyone can give feedback to the teachers / trainers about their learning experiences;

- developing their ability for self-assessment by helping them to :
  - *reflect on and evaluate their own work;*
  - *affirm their own successes and learning;*
  - *set their own goals following supportive questioning and feedback;*
  - *develop practical strategies to improve;*

- the adjustment of teaching / training to take account of the outcomes of assessment.

165

6.3
Evaluating Learning

ESTABLISHING A BASELINE

Several methods and techniques can be used in an evaluation, depending on the circumstances. Whatever method you choose, it is important to reflect on the starting point of the group so that you have a baseline.

This starting point could be in connection with, for example:

- *new learning;*
- *change of attitudes;*
- *development of skills.*

This baseline will enable you to see what has been achieved and can fit into what you are already doing, for example, the school development plan, monthly plans, training agendas, etc.

SETTING LEARNING OUTCOMES

Once the baseline is established, it is important to set a purpose / learning outcomes for any session or programme. These will provide you with indicators against which to measure your evidence, i.e. how far have you moved from the baseline in achieving the goals (learning outcomes) which you have set?

GATHERING EVIDENCE

A varied range of evaluation techniques need to be used as an integral part of the learning and teaching process, not just at the end of a session / lesson. Facilitators need to select techniques that best suit the nature of the work and the needs of the group members at the particular time, for example:

- *observation;*
- *discussion;*
- *oral, written, visual presentations, including photographs, videos, etc.;*
- *creative arts displays or presentations, including drama, puppetry, etc.;*
- *individual or group tasks;*
- *project work;*
- *homework;*
- *lesson and monthly plans;*
- *feedback questionnaires;*
- *reports and policy documents.*

The evidence from these activities should help facilitators:

- *evaluate the individual and group learning;*
- *plan the next stages of learning for this group;*
- *adapt the programme for a similar group;*
- *evaluate their own learning.*

Ideas for Inclusion to Ascertain Learning

Looking Back
- What have we learned so far?
- *What do we know now that we did not **know** at the beginning?*
- *What do we **understand** now that we did not understand at the beginning?*
- *What can we **do** now that we could not do before?*

- Which of these things helped us learn?

- How have they helped us learn?
- *the group as whole;*
- *particular group members;*
- *the group atmosphere;*
- *the learning approaches;*
- *the facilitator;*
- *the material / resources used;*
- *specific activities?*

- Did any of these things interfere with our learning in any way? If so, how?

- What have we found out about our personal ways of learning things?
- *methods we find helpful, for example, trying things out, using books, being instructed by others, using videos and learning aids;*
- *the style of learning we like best, for example, working alone, working in small groups, in pairs, working co-operatively, competing against other groups;*
- *the personal skills we use, for example, observing, listening, memorising, comparing one thing with another, making notes?*

Looking Forward
- How can we use this knowledge about the way we learn to help us with future learning?

- Where do we go next with this programme?

- If the programme is finished, is there a need for follow-up / further support for individuals or for the group?

Reflection Questions for Staff

What are the main learning methods used in the session / programme?

How interesting and useful are they?

What role do you play in the process?

Do the group members help one another learn?

Are there any changes you would make to the session / programme?

What role could the participants play in the session / programme?

How did the participants organise themselves during the activities; how were decisions made?

Did the groups work well together, how do you know this?

How good was communication, did people share ideas, information, questions?

167

835

DEVELOPING A MODEL FOR SELF-EVALUATION

Evaluation Example:
Feedback Sheet

DATE OF ASSEMBLY _____

What did you enjoy most and why?

_____

_____

_____

What did you enjoy least and why?

_____

_____

_____

One thing you did not know before this assembly?

_____

_____

_____

What will you remember about this assembly?

_____

_____

_____

168

Evaluation Example: Dartboard Evaluation

Label each segment to represent an aspect of the programme, for example, different activities, venue, etc. Assuming that the centre of the circle (the Bull's Eye) is excellent and the outside is not so good, mark each section with an 'X' or a colour to show how you felt about that programme aspect.

169

838
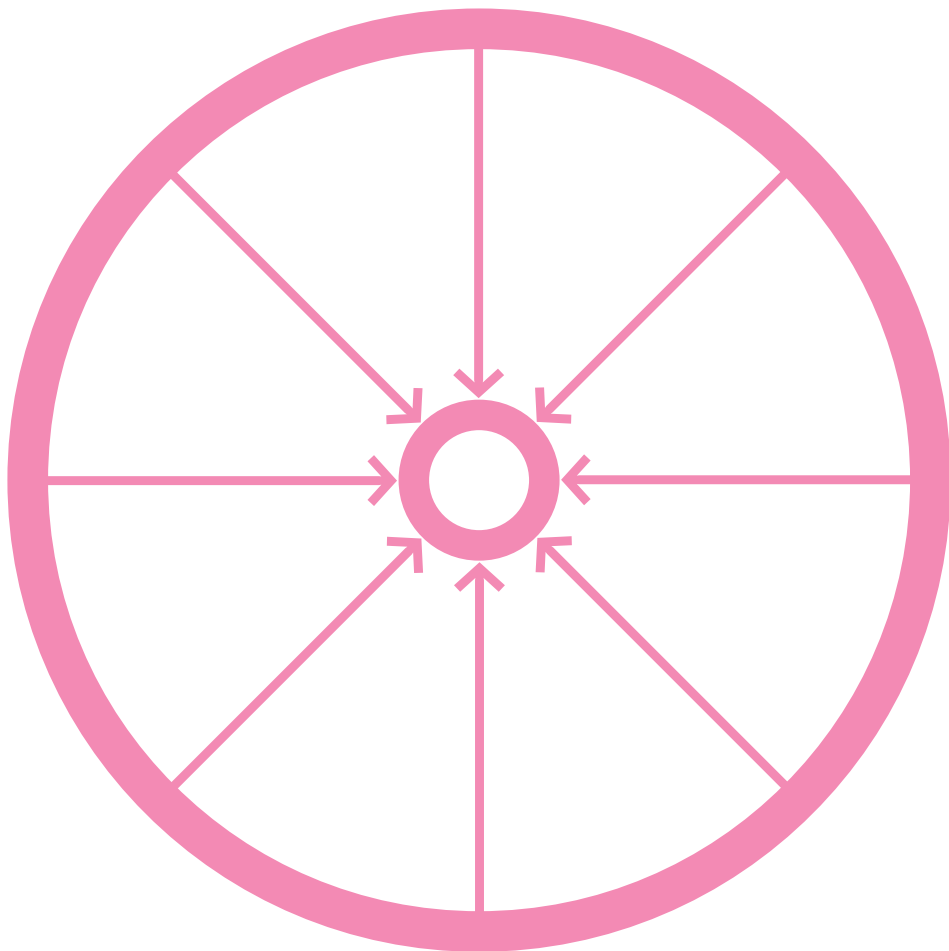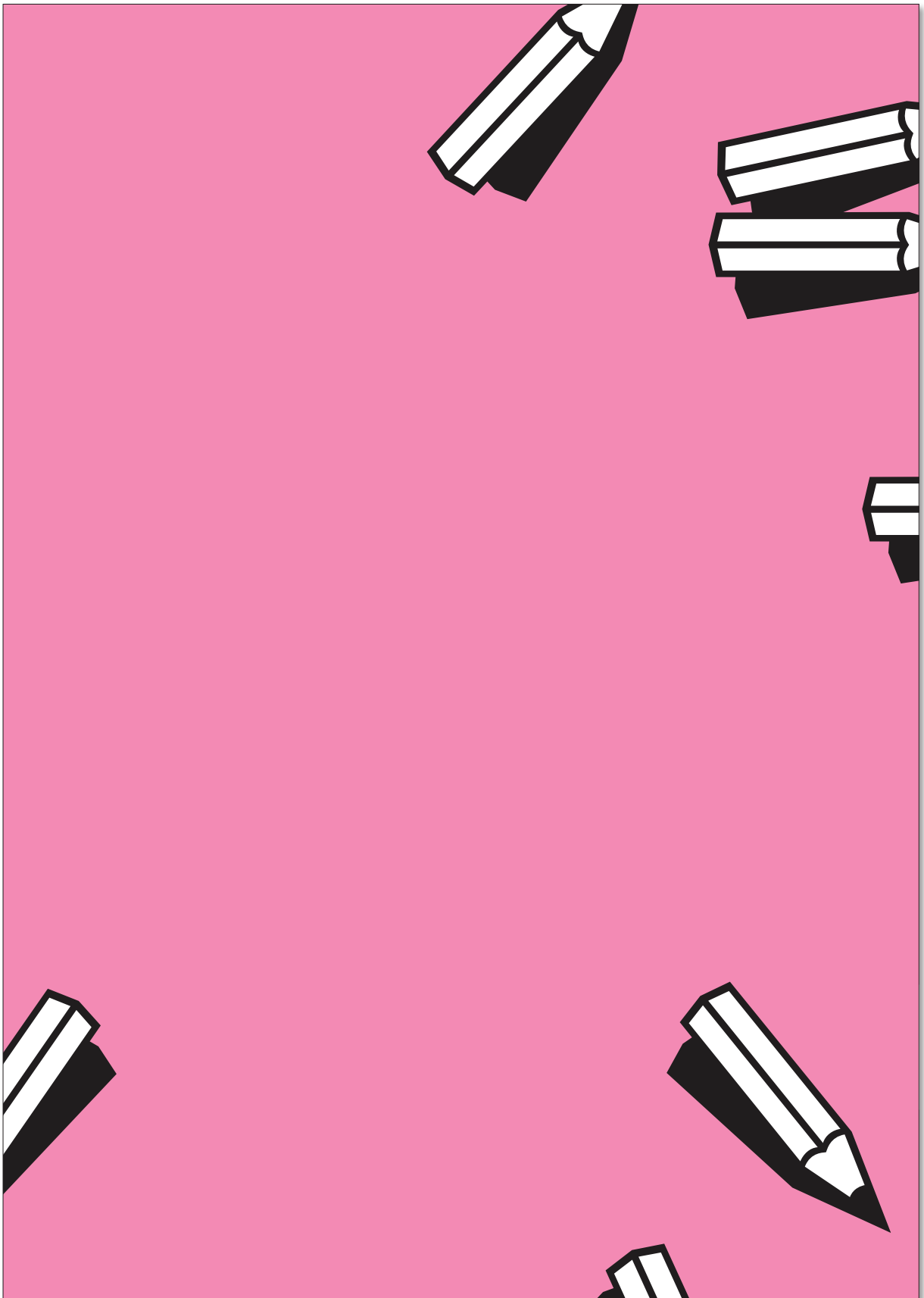
Beyond
Programmes

Learning for Life

beyond programmes

7.0
Opportunities and Support for Group Members Beyond the Programme

All learning involves some degree of change, whether in terms of:

- *levels and areas of knowledge;*
- *new and developed skills;*
- *attitudes;*
- *breadth and depth of understanding;*
- *emotions;*

or a combination of these and other factors. Therefore, if the groupwork process has been effective, this means that people are impacted in ways that go beyond the duration of the programme itself.

This should generally be a very positive thing – after all, this learning is a key reason why people were participating in the first place. Providing people with resources and support beyond the programme will help them to remember what they have learnt, and to build on it further. Some possibilities for doing this include:

- providing handouts, resources and resource lists (for example, relevant books, videos, website addresses);

- programming follow-up sessions into the class timetable, staff development strategy, etc.;

- asking people informally, individually or in a group setting, whether they have thought any more about or done anything further with their learning;

- working as a staff team – making colleagues aware of what you are doing so that they can make connections and reinforce the learning;

- follow-up through a supervision meeting;

- referring back to key learning points in other contexts to which they are transferable and encouraging the group to discuss their relevance;

- using other opportunities such as assemblies, displays, staffroom noticeboards, etc. to highlight the key learning points;

- providing people with information about other relevant training opportunities outside the school setting, and providing support in applying for these;

- drawing on other educational and external resources, for example, ELBs, local youth workers, community-based projects, issue-based organisations, etc.

173

People may also need support beyond the programme if the themes explored and the learning have been particularly challenging. It is important that the programme itself is structured so that closure, personal reflection and evaluation are all thoroughly attended to. Beyond that, some of the strategies listed above will provide opportunities to check how people are progressing with their learning and how it has impacted on their life experience. If appropriate, specific follow-up can be designed with them in order to meet their learning and support needs. Very occasionally, the work may raise personal issues for a particular individual, and it may be appropriate to encourage or enable her / him to seek specific external support such as counselling. As with all aspects of the work, it is essential to follow school procedures in doing this.

Opportunities and Support for Children and Young People

Hopefully, the themes explored and learning which takes place within the groupwork sessions will be genuinely relevant to the lives of the children and young people involved. If this is the case, it is unlikely that the experience will finish when they leave school at the end of the day or after the final session of a module / programme.

Most learning involves some level of change and if the facilitator looks honestly at the purpose of this kind of work, it is probable that there is an explicit element of change intended. This might include:

- *developing critical thinking skills;*
- *developing emotional literacy;*
- *challenging prejudice and discrimination;*
- *encouraging group members to relate more positively to those who come from backgrounds different to their own;*
- *approaching conflict situations differently.*

This is likely to be the case particularly when the themes being explored are controversial, and the groupwork is demanding with regard to the feelings, attitudes they touch and viewpoints which they challenge. In some circumstances, particularly for young people, there may be a number of difficult consequences to this. For example:

- They may experience a significant change in their ways of thinking and relating to other people, particularly those whose background or views are different to their own. This may be a challenging experience which raises feelings of uncertainty and even anxiety.

- They may find themselves in conflict at some level with family members, friends, peers and others in their community.

- For some, even to participate in a programme with people from a different community may make them vulnerable in their own community, regardless of whether or not they demonstrate changes in attitudes or behaviour as a result of their participation.

It is, therefore, really important for the facilitator to think clearly about the purpose of the work, the potential learning and change outcomes, and the support structures which are needed. There are limitations which a school will face within its particular community and societal context, but participants' safety and personal development must be appropriately attended to beyond the actual module or programme.

Below is a list of some possible structures and ways of working which will contribute to the physical and emotional safety and development of children and young people beyond the programme itself.

- The whole school model allows for a broader support context than an individual teacher working with a group on their own.

- Where appropriate, informing and involving parents and others (such as local youth workers) will broaden the support structure.

- Throughout the programme, the facilitator needs to hold a balance between acknowledging genuine fears and concerns, and encouraging participants to recognise the potentially positive outcomes of their participation and learning.

- The development of skills within the programme must be done in a way that is transferable to the rest of life. The facilitator needs to ensure that these connections are sufficiently made.

- The ethos of encouraging people to take responsibility for their own learning needs to be supported by discussion which helps them to contextualise this within their longer term experience.

- This will also involve developing their awareness and understanding of the relationship to the social and political context in which they live.

- The facilitator and others within the school need to be available to offer appropriate individual support on both an informal and formal basis. This will be dependent on the building of good relationships.

- There may be opportunities to provide training and support to older pupils so that they can take on a mentoring role for younger pupils.

- Informal and more formalised peer support structures can be developed through the programme (where hopefully a strong sense of team has been built) and beyond.

- Children and young people will benefit from the opportunity to articulate their learning with others, whether their peers or adults. As well as enabling them to develop further skills, this process affirms them, and their learning and achievement as something hugely positive.

Opportunities and Support for Adults

Many of the principles outlined in the section above will also be relevant when working with adults in the school community or in a teacher education setting.

As well as application within their broader life experience in general, it is likely that their participation in the programme is intended to have specific reference to their interaction with children and young people in the school and related settings. With this in mind, some additional forms of support beyond the programme could include:

- resources which will enable them to translate their experience as a participant into the development of programmes and the facilitation of similar work with children and / or young people;

- opportunities (through supervision meetings, follow-up sessions, etc.) to reflect on this facilitation, particularly in the early stages;

- opportunities to reflect on occasions when they have had to put their training into practice in responding to specific incidents in the classroom, the playground, etc.;

- opportunities to share their learning with other adults, for example, teachers and other staff in their own school or in other schools, governors, parents, etc.;

- further training and development opportunities which will enhance their learning and confidence.

175

7.1
Working in Partnership:
The School in the Community

It can sometimes seem that schools are expected to do everything, and this can be an enormous pressure within the restrictions of the weekly timetable, the demands of the curriculum, curricular changes, etc. It is important to remember that schools are situated within communities and there are likely to be rich human and physical resources within the local and wider community which can support the work within a programme and beyond it.

Building partnerships with, for example:

- *youth workers;*
- *community projects and residents' groups;*
- *other schools and further education colleges;*
- *churches and other faith centres;*
- *the local Council;*
- *Health and Social Services Trusts;*
- *local businesses and other workplaces;*
- *homes for elderly people;*
- *the police and fire services;*
- *local charities or voluntary organisations;*
- *cultural centres and agencies, including museums, galleries, etc.;*
- *local libraries;*
- *sports centres and facilities;*

will provide the school with a valuable pool of experience and expertise across a whole range of issues and practice, and may be useful within a particular programme and beyond it.

Questions for Reflection

Have I thoroughly considered the broader context of the programme / module which I am planning?

Have I built in sufficient time for personal reflection, evaluation and closure?

Are there likely to be physical and emotional safety issues arising from this programme?

What support and follow-up will be useful and possible beyond the programme? For example:

- *What handouts and resources can I provide?*
- *Is there scope within my time-frame for follow-up sessions?*
- *What opportunities do I have to find out informally how people are doing (for example, at the end of a class or staff meeting)?*
- *How can I ensure that future programmes for this group build on the current learning?*
- *What other appropriate external training / development opportunities can I suggest?*

Who might I need to work with to develop these options effectively?

Will this person / these people be working directly with children and / or young people? If so, what Child Protection forms need to be completed?

Some specific examples might include:

•   a local community project or residents' group which is able to provide teachers who live outside the area with some insight into issues affecting the local community;

•   local youth workers offering to run a linked programme in conjunction with, or as a follow-up to, the programme you are running within the school setting;

•   local churches and other faith centres hosting sessions as a follow-up to a school-based programme exploring themes such as diversity, sectarianism, etc.;

•   older people within the community working with children and young people to help them build their knowledge and understanding of the development and changes within their local community over the past century;

•   local businesses and / or charities and voluntary organisations providing people with opportunities to put their learning into practice, for example, giving teachers and others the opportunity to work within a youth work setting, or supporting young people developing an action project as part of Local and Global Citizenship;

•   the school and individuals within it using local shops, businesses and services.

The school can similarly be a resource to the community in which it is situated. The time taken to build these partnerships will be a valuable investment, not least because, within and outside the school, it will increase people's understanding of the school as a part of the community. The positive relationships and experiences which form through these partnerships will enable children, young people and adults to connect with the community in new ways, becoming more aware of the richness and diversity within it and of the opinions and perceptions held of the school.

Questions for Reflection

What range of partnerships can the school as a whole and I in particular build within the local community?

What opportunities are there for members of the local community to contribute to the curriculum and to school life in general?

Is there a regularly updated resources and contacts list that is accessible for everyone in the school?

Is everyone, including pupils, aware of the community resources available to them?

In what ways can the school also serve the community, so that the partnership works both ways? For example, allowing groups within the local community to book facilities within the school, such as the computer suite, playing fields, assembly hall, gym.

177

844

845
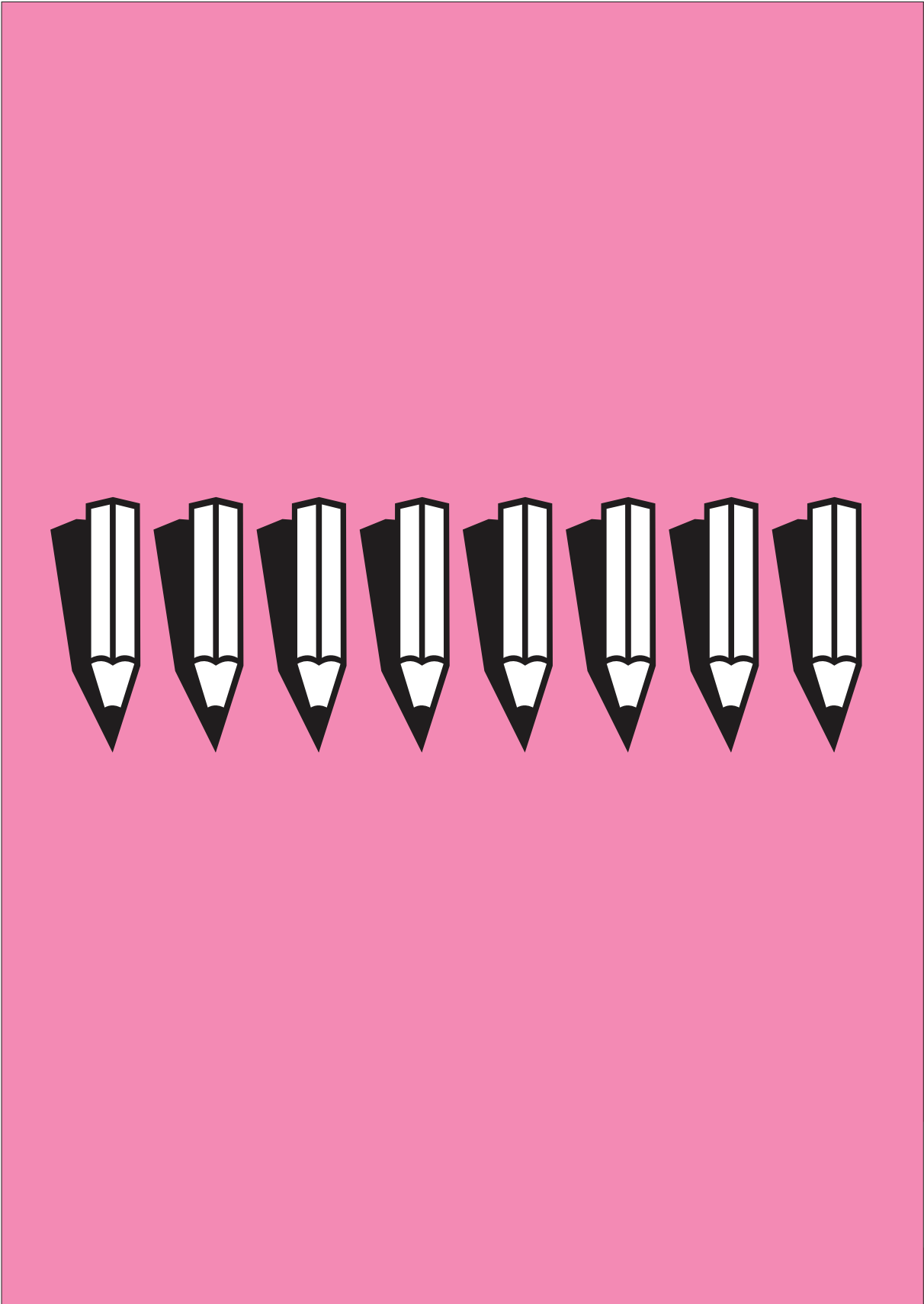
resources and information

Appendix One:
Resource List

Background Resources

CCEA (1997)
Mutual Understanding and Cultural Heritage:
Cross-Curricular Guidance Materials
Belfast, CCEA

Department of Education Circular (1999 / 10)
Pastoral Care in Schools: Child Protection

Department of Education (2003)
Review of the Schools
Community Relations Programme
Bangor, DENI

Equality Commission (2004)
Equality Awareness in Teacher
Education and Training in Northern Ireland
Belfast, Equality Commission

Smith, A. and Robinson, A. (1996)
EMU: The Initial Statutory Years
Coleraine, University of Ulster

Volunteer Development Agency (2000)
Our Duty to Care: Principles of Good Practice
for the Protection of Children and Young People
Belfast, VDA

Whole School Approaches

Baginsky, M. and Hannam, D.
The Schools Councils.
The Views of Students and Teachers
London, NSPCC

Booth, T. et al. (2000)
Index for Inclusion: Developing
Learning and Participation in Schools
Bristol, CSIE

Burns, S. and Lamont, G. (1995)
Values and Visions
London, Hodder & Stoughton

Department of Education (2001)
Pastoral Care in Schools:
Promoting Positive Behaviour
Bangor, Department of Education

Eyben, K., Morrow, D. and Wilson, D. (2003)
A Framework for Organisational
Learning and Change
Coleraine, Future Ways

Furlong, C. and Monahan, L. (2000)
School Culture and Ethos: Cracking the Code
Marino Institute of Education

181

Leadbetter, J. (1999)
'The Inclusive Classroom: Taking Account of the Individual,' in Leadbetter, J. et al.
Applying Psychology in the Classroom
London, David Fulton Publishing

Mitchell, P. (2002)
Focus on Bullying: Guidance and Resources for Post-Primary Schools
Belfast, Save the Children

Senge, P. et al. (2000)
Schools That Learn
London, Nicholas Brealey Publishing

Sutton, F. (ed.) (1999)
The School Council: A Children's Guide
London, Save the Children

Taylor, M.J. (1998)
Values Education and Values in Education
London, Association of Teachers and Lecturers

Tyrell, J. (2002)
Peer Mediation: A Process for Primary Schools
London, Souvenir Press

Groupwork and Facilitation

Benson, J. (1997)
Working More Creatively with Groups
London, Routledge

Kindred, M. (1995)
Once Upon a Group
London, Roy Allen Print Ltd

Prendiville, P. (1995)
Developing Facilitation Skills: A Handbook for Group Facilitators
Dublin, Combat Poverty Agency

Skinner, S. (1992)
Training and How Not to Panic
Halifax, Community Development Training Unit

Intrapersonal and Interpersonal Skills Development

Gardner, H. (1993, 2nd Edition)
Frames of Mind: The Theory of Multiple Intelligences
London, Fontana Press

Ginnis, P. (2002)
The Teacher's Toolkit: Raise Classroom Achievement with Strategies for Every Learner
Carmarthen, Crown House Publishing

Goleman, D. (1996)
Emotional Intelligence: Why It Can Matter More Than IQ
London, Bloomsbury Publishing

Hall, E. (2002)
Let's Be Friends: Friendship Skills in Year 3
Belfast, The Churches' Peace Education Programme

Montgomery, A. and Birthistle, U. (2001)
Primary Values: A literacy based resource to support the Personal Development Programme in primary schools
Belfast, CCEA

Mosley, J. and Gillibrand, E. (2001)
Personal Power: How to Fulfil Your Private and Professional Life
Trowbridge, Positive Press

Popov, L.K. (2000)
The Virtues Project Educator's Guide: Simple Ways to Create a Culture of Character
Torrance CA, Jalmar Press

Schilling, D. (1996)
50 Activities for Teaching Emotional Intelligence (Level II: Middle School)
Torrance CA, Innerchoice Publishing

848

Thompson, H. and Maguire, S. (2002)
Mind Your Head!
Get to Know Your Brain and How to Learn
Antrim, NEELB

Whitehouse, E. and Pudney, W. (1996)
A Volcano in My Tummy: Helping Children
to Handle Anger, Gabriola Island
Canada, New Society Publisher

Exploring Diversity

BAA / Nottingham Project
Teaching Through Controversial Issues
Nottingham, BAA

CCEA (2001)
Interlinks: Supporting intercultural education
at Key Stage 2 – A CD-Rom for PC and Macintosh
Belfast, CCEA

Community Relations Council (2004)
A Good Relations Framework
Belfast, CRC

Connolly, P. (1999)
Community Relations Work
with Preschool Children
Belfast, CRC

Connolly, P. (2002)
Fair Play: Talking with Children about
Prejudice & Discrimination
Belfast, Barnardo's / Save the Children

Connolly, P., Smith, S. and Kelly, B. (2002)
Too Young to Notice?
The Cultural and Political Awareness
of 3-6 Year Olds in Northern Ireland
Belfast, Community Relations Council

Council of Europe (2000)
Intercultural Learning
Strasbourg, Council of Europe and
European Commission

Liechty, J. and Clegg, C. (2001)
Moving Beyond Sectarianism:
Religion, Conflict and Reconciliation
in Northern Ireland
Dublin, Columba Press

Murphy, K. (1999)
A Companion to An Ulster Wean's A – Z
Belfast, Community Relations Council

Naylor, Y. (2001)
Moving Beyond Sectarianism: A Resource
for Young Adults, Youth and Schools
Belfast, Irish School of Ecumenics

Naylor, Y. (2003)
Who We Are – Dealing With Difference:
A resource for children and young people 9–14
Belfast, Irish School of Ecumenics

Northern Ireland Council
for Integrated Education (2002)
The Anti-Bias Curriculum
Belfast, NICIE

NUS-USI (2000)
Promoting and Managing Diversity in
Tertiary Education: A guide to implementing
community relations strategies on campus
in Northern Ireland
Belfast, NUS-USI Northern Ireland
Student Centre

Richardson, N. (2001)
Making Rainbows: Creative Ideas for Exploring
and Celebrating Differences (Key Stage 2)
Belfast, Enelar Publications

Richardson, N. (ed.) (2002)
A Handbook of Faiths: A Brief Introduction
to Faith Communities in Northern Ireland
Belfast, Northern Ireland Inter-Faith Forum

Sands, C. (2001)
Moving Beyond Sectarianism:
A Resource for Adult Education
Belfast, Irish School of Ecumenics

Solomon, R. P. (1995)
'Beyond Prescriptive Pedagogy: Teacher
In-Service Education for Cultural Diversity'
in Journal of Teacher Education, 46(4)

Williams, T., McGovern, M. and Curran, C. (2001)
Creating Community
Belfast, The Corrymeela Community

Exploring Conflict

BBC Northern Ireland
A State Apart: Northern Ireland –
An Interactive Chronicle of the Conflict
(CD-Rom)

Burrows, R. and Keenan, B. (2004)
'We'll never be the same'
Learning with children, parents and
communities through ongoing political
conflict and trauma: a resource
Belfast, Barnardo's

Connolly, P. and Healy, J. (2004)
Children and the Conflict in Northern
Ireland: The Experiences and Perspectives
of 3–11 Year Olds
Belfast, OFMDFM Research Branch

Fisher, R., Ury, W. and Patton, B. (1992)
'Getting to Yes.
Negotiating an agreement without giving in'
Random House Business Books

Fitzduff, M. (1999)
Community Conflict Skills:
A handbook for groupwork
Belfast, Community Relations Council

Hopkins, B.
www.transformingconflict.org

Leitch, R. and Kilpatrick, R. (1999)
Inside the Gate: Schools and the Troubles
Belfast, Save the Children

McLaughlin, M. and Regan, C. (2000)
A Place Apart? Exploring Conflict, Peace and
Reconciliation: The Case of Northern Ireland
Glencree, The Glencree Centre for Reconciliation

Morrow, D. and Wilson, D. (1996)
Ways Out of Conflict:
Resources for Community Relations Work
Coleraine, Understanding Conflict Trust

1916: Lest We Forget -
The Symbols CD-Rom Interactive Experience
Derry / Londonderry, The Nerve Centre

Pocock, M. (2001)
Creative Force: Arts-based exercises for work
with young people around issues of violence
London, Save the Children

Smyth, M. et al. (2004)
The Impact of the Political Conflict
on Children in Northern Ireland
Belfast, Institute for Conflict Research

Circle Time

Cowling, A. and Vine, P. (2003)
Bridging the Circle:
Transition Through Quality Circle Time
Trowbridge, Positive Press

Davies, G. (ed.) (1999)
Six Years of Circle Time:
A Curriculum for Key Stages 1 & 2
Bristol, Lucky Duck Publishing

Mosley, J. (2000)
More Quality Circle Time: Evaluating your practice and developing creativity within the Whole School Quality Circle Time model
Wisbech, LDA

Mosley, J. (2000)
Quality Circle Time in the Primary Classroom
Wisbech, LDA

Mosley, J. (2000)
Turn Your School Round
Wisbech, LDA

Mosley, J. and Sonnet, H. (2001)
Here We Go Round:
Quality Circle Time for 3-5 Year Olds
Trowbridge, Positive Press

Mosley, J. and Tew, M. (1999)
Quality Circle Time in the Secondary School
London, David Fulton Publishing

Activity-based Resources

Craig, C. et al. (2002)
Different Tracks Experiential Learning:
A Practical Resource Guide for Community Relations Work
Belfast, The Corrymeela Community

Smith, A. and Call, N. (2001)
ALPS Approach Resource Book, London
Network Education Press

Tyrell, J., Hartop, B. and Farrell, S. (1999)
EMU: The Games Book
Derry / Londonderry, Positive Ethos Trust

Human Rights and Citizenship

Advisory Group on Citizenship (1998)
Education for Citizenship and
the Teaching of Democracy in Schools
London, QCA

Amnesty International (2002)
Learning About Human Rights Through Citizenship (Key Stage 3+)
London, Amnesty International

Brander, P. et al. (2002)
A Manual on Human Rights Education with Young People
Strasbourg, Council of Europe

BBC Worldwide (2000)
Study Ireland: Citizenship
(video resource for 11 – 14 year olds)

Britten, F. (2000)
Active Citizenship: A Teaching Toolkit
London, Hodder & Stoughton

Brown, M. and Durie, D. (2000)
Local Citizen, Global Citizen: Activities for teaching citizenship and personal-social development for use with 8 to 12 year olds
London, Christian Aid

Burca, U. and Jeffers, G. (1998)
Connected: Civic, Social and Political Education for First Year
Dublin, The Educational Company of Ireland

Burca, U. and Jeffers, G. (1999)
Connected: Civic, Social and Political Education for Second & Third Year
Dublin, The Educational Company of Ireland

CCEA (2003)
Local and Global Citizenship:
A Resource for Post-Primary Schools
Belfast, CCEA

185

Cuthbert, C. (2001)
Exploring Our World:
Investigating Issues of Interdependence and
Social Justice in the 21st Century
Belfast, One World Centre

4Learning (2001)
Sarah and the Whammi: Early Learning
For pre-school and 4–6 year olds
(video)

4Learning (2002)
Using Sarah and the Whammi:
Teachers' Programme
(video)

Garlake, T. and Pocock, M. (2000)
Partners in Rights: Creative activities explor-
ing rights and citizenship for 7-11 year olds
London, Save the Children

Northern Ireland Human Rights
Commission (2000)
Bill of Rights for Northern Ireland:
A Training Manual
Belfast, NIHRC

QCA (2001)
Citizenship: A Scheme of Work for
Key Stage 3
London, QCA

Taylor, M. (2002)
The European Convention on Human
Rights: Starting Points for Teachers
Strasbourg, Council of Europe

Walton, J. (1993)
It's Not Fair: A Handbook on
World Development for Youth Groups
London, Christian Aid

Youth Work Approaches

Curriculum Development Unit (2003)
Youth Work: A Model for Effective Practice
Antrim, Youth Work N.I. Curriculum
Development Unit

JEDI Practice Group (2002)
A Framework for Reflection in Practice:
Guidelines for embedding EDI principles
in youth work practice
Belfast, JEDI

Evaluation

Department of Education's Education and
Training Inspectorate
Together Towards Improvement and
Progress for Evaluation
Bangor, ETI

Greenaway, R. (1990)
More Than Activities
Glasgow, Save the Children

Further resources and links are available from:

www.nicie.org.uk
www.corrymeela.org

186

852

Appendix Two:
Whole School Audit

This general audit[1] needs to be adapted to the particular context of the individual school, which may mean adding, changing or omitting certain questions from the sample outlines over the following pages.

The questions can be changed into questionnaire format appropriate to particular groupings (for example, teachers, other staff, pupils, parents, and governors). In the questionnaire format, it can be more useful to frame the questions around 'what do you think' to elicit personal responses and views. It is also important to ensure that the language used is appropriate for the target grouping, for example, avoiding jargon / abbreviations, using a few questions with picture-based responses for younger children, etc. Too many questions can put people off – so select a number of key questions (or write alternatives) for each section, rather than including all of them.

In both the questionnaire and general audit format it is important to provide appropriate practical and / or anecdotal (avoiding use of names, etc. to maintain confidentiality) evidence to support the answers. The answers and evidence will provide the baseline from which you can develop your action plan for achieving your vision goals.

187

853

Sample Outline:
Whole School Audit

Leadership:
Management Structures and
Decision-making Processes

WITHIN THE STAFF TEAM

How many staff [2] make up the whole staff team?

Describe the leadership / management
structures within the school.

Is it a priority of the school to have a diverse
leadership team?

Are staff aware of the priorities of the school
development plan?

Are staff given opportunities to be involved
in contributing to the school development plan?

Do staff feel that they are sufficiently
involved in school decision-making?

2 Throughout the audit, 'staff' is used to refer to all staff,
support staff as well as teachers.

854

How are decisions communicated to the
whole staff team?

What support is available to staff through
the management structures, for example, in
terms of supervision, in responding to
challenging behaviour or incidents, etc.?

What structural support is available to the
leadership / senior management team?

Are staff involved in the development of the
school policies?

Does the leadership of the school encourage staff
to use their full expertise, skills and creativity?

How is in-service training decided on,
delivered and managed?

Are there sufficient staff meetings?

Are support staff invited to attend relevant
meetings?

189

Is there wide participation in staff meetings?
Do all staff feel comfortable to contribute?

Do staff feel that their contribution is valued,
irrespective of their position in the school?

BOARD OF GOVERNORS

Do staff understand the role and
responsibilities of governors?

Do governors share in-service training
opportunities with staff?

Do governors and staff work well together?

Do governors and staff agree about what
governors can contribute to the school?

Do governors and staff have a shared
commitment to the school's vision and
values, and support each other in their work?

856

Internal Relationships: Pupils, Staff and Parents / Carers

PUPILS AND STAFF

Do staff treat all pupils with respect, regardless of their backgrounds, abilities, etc.?

Do pupils treat all staff with respect, regardless of their position?

Do staff attempt to counter negative views of and derogatory comments about pupils by both pupils and other staff?

Do staff promote equality of opportunity for all pupils?

Do staff treat all pupils with fairness, regardless of background, abilities, etc.?

Is there a forum for pupils to express views and to be involved in school decision-making?

Do pupils' opinions and ideas make a real difference to the school?

191

857

Do staff see the personal and cultural diversity
of pupils as a rich context for learning?

WITHIN THE STAFF TEAM

Do staff treat each other with respect,
regardless of their position?

Do staff feel comfortable discussing challenges
and dilemmas with colleagues?

Do staff recognise how their behaviour and
interactions are a model for pupils?

Do staff know whom to turn to if there is
a problem?

Do staff recognise the richness of their own
diverse backgrounds, skills and qualities?

Do all staff have structured opportunities for
collaborative working and reflection?

192

Do all staff take responsibility for trying to
make the school more inclusive?

Do staff demonstrate effective conflict
resolution skills with pupils, colleagues
and others?

Is the staffroom a welcoming and comfortable
place for all staff?

STAFF AND PARENTS / CARERS

Are parents / carers made to feel welcome in
the school?

Do staff and parents / carers treat each other
with respect?

Do staff encourage the involvement of all
parents / carers in their children's learning?

Do parents / carers take an active part in
their children's learning? Are they clear
about what they can do to support their
children's learning at home?

193

Are efforts made to overcome any barriers
there may be to parents' / carers' involvement
in their children's learning?

Is there good communication between staff
and parents / carers?

What opportunities are there for parents /
carers to consult teachers about their
children's learning?

Are parents / carers well informed about
school policies and practices?

Are parents / carers involved or consulted in
school decision-making?

Are parents' / carers' skills and knowledge
utilised within the school?

Is there a Parents' / Carers' Group or Parents'
/ Carers'-Teachers Association?

194

860

BETWEEN PUPILS

Do pupils have good self-esteem?

Do pupils treat each other with respect regardless of background, ability, etc.?

Do pupils appreciate the achievements of others, recognising that different people have different starting points?

Do pupils help and support each other, not just those in their immediate friendship circle?

Do pupils work well together on group / team activities?

Do pupils demonstrate effective conflict resolution skills?

Is bullying being minimised among pupils?

Are there peer (pupil – pupil) mentoring or mediation programmes within the school?

195

861

School Policies

PROMOTING INCLUSIVITY ACROSS POLICIES

How does the school attempt to minimise all institutional prejudice and discrimination?

How do policies explicitly contribute to and support anti-discriminatory practice?

Are policies written in inclusive language?

Do policies and practice ensure that minority groups in the school do not experience prejudice, stereotyping, discrimination or exclusion?

Do staff avoid stereotyping and discrimination in choosing pupils for tasks, roles in school productions, etc.?

Is it recognised that individuals have multiple dimensions of identity, and that within a particular grouping individuals will have different beliefs, attitudes and experiences?

Are policies developed in ways which overcome barriers to participation and learning?

862

Is the school addressing aspects of physical accessibility throughout its buildings and grounds?

STAFFING POLICIES

Does the composition of the staff team reflect the communities in the school's locality?

Do the management posts reflect the balance of genders and backgrounds of staff in the school?

Is a commitment to the values of inclusivity, respect for diversity, enabling participation and open communication regarded as an essential criterion for the appointment of staff?

Do all appointments and promotions procedures demonstrate fairness and transparency?

Are strategies in place to develop a sense of team among the staff, particularly with regard to welcoming new members?

How democratic are the policy development processes within the school?

197

863

PASTORAL / LEARNING SUPPORT / POSITIVE BEHAVIOUR POLICIES

Are pupils, parents / carers and others consulted in developing these and other policies?

Do pupils know who to go to if they have a particular difficulty? Do they feel comfortable to do this?

Is support for pupils who experience barriers to learning and participation seen as a responsibility of all members of staff?

Do all staff receive training and support in responding to pupils who may approach them because they are troubled about something within or outside school?

Is there a pro-active approach to bullying attitudes, language and behaviour?

Do all staff receive training and support in challenging sectarianism, racism, sexism, homophobia and other forms of prejudice and bullying?

Are relational and restorative approaches used to respond to behavioural issues?

864

Are pupils involved in developing school /
classroom rules as a matter of policy?

Are there clear reward, warning and sanction
systems, which enable pupils to be clear about
the likely consequences of their behaviour?

Are there clear procedures in place to respond
to the extremes of challenging behaviour?

What support structures are there for
individual staff members who have to
respond to persistent challenging behaviour?

In what ways are pupils positively involved in
overcoming behavioural issues and disaffection?

Once a behavioural issue has been addressed,
do pupils experience 'forgiveness' and the
freedom to start with a 'clean slate'?

199

Teaching and Learning Approaches

What does the school understand 'learning' to consist of?

How does the school understand itself as an inclusive learning community?

Are there opportunities for everyone in the school to learn and develop, and to make informed choices with regard to their learning needs and opportunities?

Do teaching approaches within the school reflect a commitment to inclusion, respect for diversity, enabling participation, and open communication?

Does the school provide support for pupils for whom English is not their first language?

How does the school value and give affirmation to people in the diversity of their intelligences, skills and achievements?

How are opportunities created for everyone to learn effectively and to experience success?

866

Are all pupils and staff encouraged to have
high aspirations about their learning?

Are people encouraged to view mistakes /
failures as positive learning opportunities?

How are opportunities created for people to be
co-learners, learning from and with each other?

Where pupils have areas of particular skill
and experience, are they encouraged to share
these with their peers and also with staff?

Are there opportunities for learning and
relational skills development for all the
different groupings within the school
community?

Do staff feel confident and supported to
explore challenging or controversial themes
with pupils, colleagues and others?

Are issues of prejudice and conflict openly,
respectfully and constructively discussed?

201

What opportunities are there for self and team evaluation?

Are there positive relationships in place so that people are able to give each other constructive feedback and learning support?

Other Working Practices

CLASSROOM AND CURRICULUM ISSUES

Do staff members avoid classist, sexist, racist, disabilist or homophobic and other forms of discriminatory remarks and thereby act as positive role models?

Are pupils encouraged to work with others who are different from themselves in terms of background, gender, impairment and ethnicity?

Does the curriculum seek to develop an understanding of differences of background, culture, ethnicity, gender, impairment, sexual orientation and religion?

Is stereotyping questioned in curriculum material and during classroom discussion and after school activities?

202

868

Is there a range of assessments used that
allow all pupils to display their skills?

Do teachers share in planning schemes of
work for lessons and homework?

Do teachers and classroom assistants share
in working with individuals, groups and the
whole class?

Are learning support assistants involved in
curriculum planning and review?

Do teachers welcome comments from
colleagues?

Do teachers share their attention equitably,
irrespective of gender, ethnicity, class and
culture?

Do all pupils feel fairly treated?

203

869

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (RE) PROVISION

Is RE delivered to take into consideration the diversity of faiths?

Are world faiths celebrated within the school?

If the school has a Christian ethos is it inclusive for non-Christians?

What festivals / holy days do you celebrate in the school calendar?

Are key milestones in individual pupil's spiritual development marked by the school community?

Are religious symbols displayed in the classroom and school building?

Are the religious symbols balanced for all faiths and none?

870

SCHOOL DISPLAYS

How do you ensure that all the communities within the school are represented in the displays?

What is the purpose of the displays within the school?

In what way does display enhance pupils' and adults' learning?

How is diversity evident in library materials and school / classroom displays?

ASSEMBLIES

Do you have daily, weekly or monthly assemblies?

What is the purpose of assemblies in the school?

205

Does the whole school gather for assembly or
is it in smaller groups?

How often does a whole school assembly
take place?

What themes are selected for assemblies -
how are they selected?

Who is responsible for organising assemblies?

Are children and young people involved in
the planning and delivery?

Are guest speakers used for assemblies?
If so, how often and which organisations
are represented?

Are the speakers representative of a diverse
society?

Is attendance at assemblies voluntary
or mandatory?

206

872

Do you use prayers during assemblies?

Does the assembly have a Christian emphasis?

Is there provision for non-Christians
during assemblies?

EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Is there a range of after-school activities?

Is transport made available to enable those
who have far to travel?

Are there opportunities for boys and girls to
take part in single sex activities?

Are pupils discouraged from monopolising
the play areas with, for example, football?

207

Are pupils who get chosen to represent
the school representative of the diversity
of the school?

Do sports days include activities in which
everyone can take part irrespective of skill
level, etc.?

What clubs, societies, charity work does the
school support? How are they chosen - are
they balanced?

Are religious dietary requirements taken into
consideration in the planning and preparation
of school meals?

Relationships with the Wider Community

Is the first contact that people have with the
school friendly and welcoming?

Does the school involve local communities in
activities in the school?

874

Do members of the local community partici-
pate equally in the school regardless of their
background (religious, ethnic, economic, etc.)?
Is there a positive view of the school within
the local community?

Are the school's entrance criteria for pupils
inclusive and enabling to all children / young
people within the local community, regardless
of background, ability, etc.?

Do many of the staff team come from the
local communities?

Does the school view the local communities
as a valuable learning resource?

Is there a regularly updated record of
resources in the locality that can support
teaching and learning?

Do members of the local community contribute
to staff development / training and to the
pupils' curriculum?

Does the school have a good relationship with
individuals in the local communities who can
help build an understanding of community
issues / events which may be impacting on
pupils' needs, learning, behaviour, etc.?

209

Relationships with the Wider Education Sector

Who does the school liaise with within
the sector?

Is there a record of contacts maintained in
the school?

Has the school discussed the impact of the
developments within the education sector?

How do you see the school responding to
the changes within the education sector of
which it is part?

How do you see the school responding to the
changes with technology?

How do you see the school adapting to
political changes?

What resources does the school share with
other educationalists?

876

How does the school represent itself to other educationalists?

What does the school foresee to be the biggest challenge in the next three years?

Does the school have relationships with other schools? Do these support the pupils and adults to learn about diversity?

How does the school relate to and work with other practitioners who work with children and young people?

Appendix Three:
Outline Circle Time Session 1 [3]

THEME / TITLE:
Exploring Identity – 'Myself'

TIME AVAILABLE:
25 minutes

AGE GROUP:
Foundation Stage / KS1 *

INTENDED LEARNING OUTCOMES:
- *To enable the children to explore their awareness of themselves*
- *To encourage the children to relate positively to each other*
- *To build self-esteem and respect for self and others*

1   WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION:
Purpose:
to find out more about each other and the things that are important to us

Reminder of Circle Time Rules:
We listen to each other; we are kind to each other; we have fun together. (Use written / picture posters and / or actions to help children remember.)

'What skills am I going to be watching out for?' (Listening / looking / speaking / thinking / concentrating – use actions / pointing together to help children remember.)

2   INTRODUCTORY GAME / ACTIVITY:

Handshake Game
Purpose:
importance of name as part of identity, communication skills, encouraging participation

One person starts by turning to the person on her / his right, shaking her / his hand and saying, 'Hello, my name is …'. The second replies, 'Hello, my name is …'. S/he then turns to the person on her / his right, and this continues right around the circle.

3   SENTENCE COMPLETION:
'Something I like doing in school / at home / at the weekend is … '

Purpose:
thinking about myself / self-reflection, responsibility for self, communication skills, encouraging participation

Resources:
talking object – e.g. a teddy

Give the children a few seconds to think about the sentence, then ask for a volunteer to start. S/he can choose which way around the circle to pass the 'talking object'. Encourage the children to say the start of the sentence as well as completing it as this supports them in taking responsibility for their own thinking.

4 DISCUSSION FORUM / SHARING MORE INFORMATION:

Star Badges
Purpose:
self-reflection, creativity, affirmation, communication skills

Resources:
card stars, crayons

Give each child a star cut out of cardboard, and give them five minutes to write their name (or you can do this in advance, if need be) and draw a picture of something they are good at doing. Afterwards, go around the circle, using the sentence starter such as, 'I am good at . . . ' to enable the children to describe their picture. You could finish with a clap for everyone.

5 CLOSURE:

Rainstorm
Purpose:
working together, concentration skills, using up energy, bringing group to quietness at the session end

For this game, everyone needs to keep quiet and copy the leader's actions (once the children learn it, the leader does not always have to be the teacher!). Begin by clicking

your fingers, or tapping one finger on each hand together, then rub your hands together, then clap them slowly and not too loudly, then get louder, then pat your hands on your knees, then stamp your feet as well, as loudly as you can. Then work backwards through the sequence until the sun comes out (make a big circle shape with your hands) and everyone is completely quiet.

6 EVALUATION / PLANNING AHEAD:

* This outline provides ideas that might be suitable for Foundation Stage / KS1 pupils. However, it needs to be adapted to suit the specific group of pupils with which you are working. For example, with a younger group, you may need a shorter session, so include fewer activities in the middle part of the session. Alternatively, you could divide this session into three to four ten minute sessions, ensuring that you have an opening and closure point with each one.

213

Outline Circle Time Session 2 [4]

THEME / TITLE:
Our Local Community *

TIME AVAILABLE:
30 minutes

AGE GROUP:
KS2 **

INTENDED LEARNING OUTCOMES:
- *To enable the children to become more aware of their local community and how they feel about it*
- *To build respect for each other and the people who live in their community*
- *To develop awareness of difference / diversity within their local community*

1   WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION:

Purpose:
how we feel about living / going to school in our local community, the different things we find here, what it looks like, what there is to do, the people who live here, etc.

Reminder of Circle Time Rules

2   INTRODUCTORY GAME / ACTIVITY:

Silent Statements Mixing Up

Purpose:
gently splitting up any cliques, encouraging different people to work together, introducing the session's theme, opportunity to observe what some key interests / issues might be

When you call out a statement, everyone to whom it applies gets up and moves to another seat. They must not move to the seat on either side of them or, within that go, return to their own seat.

Start with some fun statements, moving from the visual to things that cannot be seen – do not include statements that will only apply to one person. It can also be important to finish with a more light-hearted statement.

As an alternative, you can take away a seat, and let the person left in the middle each time come up with the next statement – if s/he is stuck, s/he can say, 'everyone change places.' You cannot determine the statements, although you can give some guidance as to the theme. Also, be aware of your group – being left in the middle may put some children under too much pressure, particularly in the early stages of the academic year, and this method may be inappropriate.

Examples, where everyone:

- *wearing blue, change places*
- *who had cereal for breakfast, change places*
- *who lives near the school, change places*
- *who walks to school, change places*
- *who buys at the local shops, change places*
- *who has friends on their street, change places*
- *who likes living in this area, change places*
- *who likes fruit, change places*

3   SENTENCE COMPLETION:

'Something I like about living in this area is ...'

Purpose:

developing the theme, communication skills, enabling participation

Resources:

talking object – e.g. soft toy, bean bag

Give the children a few seconds to think about the sentence, then ask for a volunteer to start. S/he can choose which way around the circle to pass the 'talking object'. Encourage the children to say the start of the sentence as well as completing it.

4   DISCUSSION FORUM /
SHARING MORE INFORMATION:

Community Maps

Purpose:

exploration of theme, communication skills, reflection, decision-making

Resources:

A3 paper, crayons / pens

Small groups of approximately four pupils are asked to draw a basic map of the area where they live, marking on it any buildings, places, etc. that they have noticed. Encourage the small groups to discuss their maps, including the things they like and dislike about their area, other things that they wish were there and where they could be located, whether they think it is a friendly place to live, etc. A volunteer from each group can then feed back to the large group two important things they talked about, and / or all the maps can be spread on the floor / desks so that everyone can walk around and have a look. The teacher can

then facilitate a general discussion, possibly gathering the main points on a flipchart / whiteboard for exploration in future sessions.

5   CLOSURE:

'Electric Shock' Game

Purpose:

bringing everyone together at the end of the session, easing out of the discussion, teamwork, concentration skills

Everyone sits without speaking and holds hands (not too hard!). The teacher squeezes the hand of the person on their right, s/he passes the squeeze on, and so on right around the circle. Variations include seeing how fast the 'shock' can be passed around, passing a 'shock' in both directions so it has to cross in the middle, etc.

6   EVALUATION / PLANNING AHEAD:

* This is a theme which it would be useful to explore over a number of sessions. It could include supplementary activities such as going on a walk around the local community, taking photographs / video, exploring local history with older people who have lived in the community for a long time, looking at flags and symbols in the area, etc. It is important to note that if all pupils do not live locally, you will need to re-frame the session as the school's local community, or look at the different areas that pupils live in.

** This outline provides ideas suitable for KS2 pupils. However, it needs to be adapted to the specific group with which you are working.

215

Outline Circle Time Session 3 [5]

THEME / TITLE:
Prejudice and Stereotyping *

TIME AVAILABLE:
45 minutes **

AGE GROUP:
KS3+ ***

INTENDED LEARNING OUTCOMES:
- *To encourage empathy and respect for self and others*
- *To build an understanding of the terms 'prejudice', 'stereotyping' and 'discrimination'*
- *To explore 'real life' examples of prejudice, stereotyping and discrimination*

1 WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION:

Purpose:
sharing intended learning outcomes, encouraging everyone's participation

Reminder of Circle Time Rules

2 INTRODUCTORY GAME / ACTIVITY:

Pattern Ball
Purpose:
introductory game to encourage the group to work together and build a sense of team, co-operation, thinking / concentration skills

Resources:
soft ball / bean bag, flipchart, pens

Everyone stands in the circle. One person begins by throwing the ball / bean bag to another person, saying her / his own name and the second person's name. The second person then throws the ball / bean bag to someone else. Once someone has received the ball, s/he then sits down which ensures that everyone gets a turn, completing the pattern. Variations can include repeating the same pattern of throwing as fast as possible (safely!), reversing the pattern, etc.

'Today we are going to begin thinking about prejudice, stereotyping and discrimination. Can anyone tell me what they think any of those words mean, or give me an example of them?'

Discussion of meanings / examples, possibly noting key points on a flipchart / whiteboard.

882

2 INTRODUCTORY GAME / ACTIVITY:

Mixing Up Activity: Concentric Circles

Purpose:
developing the theme, giving people the opportunity to talk about related topics on a one-to-one level before discussing them in larger groups, gently breaking up cliques, encouraging different people to work together, thinking and communication skills

Everyone gets into pairs, labelling themselves 'A' and 'B'. The As form an outer circle, facing inwards, and the Bs form an inner circle, facing their partner. All of the pairs are then given a topic to discuss, then the outer circle moves one (or more) places to their right / left, and a new topic is given. This continues for several topics, including both fun ones and ones relating to the session theme. When the pairs have finished their final topic, they will be with someone different and they sit down beside that person.

Topic examples:

- *The best film I've ever seen.*
- *Somewhere I'd really like to visit.*
- *A time I felt different from other people.*
- *An example of prejudice / stereotyping / discrimination I've seen in the media.*
- *An example of prejudice / stereotyping / discrimination I've seen or experienced.*
- *A time I was left out / laughed at, and how I felt about it.*

3 SENTENCE COMPLETION:

Pairs Discussion

Purpose:
to give people time to think and test ideas with a partner before sharing them in the large group, to enable people to talk about experiences they may have had without personalising them in the large group at this stage, to develop emotional literacy, particularly empathy, reflection and listening skills

Resources:
talking object – e.g. juggling ball

Short discussion in pairs about how someone might feel if they were discriminated against.

Everyone feeds back one idea to the large group: 'When someone is discriminated against, they might feel . . .'

4 DISCUSSION FORUM / SHARING MORE INFORMATION:

Collages

Purpose:
developing the theme, building understanding of the connections between prejudice, stereotyping and discrimination, teamwork, thinking and communication skills

Resources:
A3 paper, newspapers / magazines, scissors, glue, pens

Working in groups of approximately four people, give each group 10 - 15 minutes to make up a collage of images which they

217

consider to be stereotypes. They can also draw their own examples. Give each group the opportunity to report back on their collage.

This could be followed by a general discussion, considering questions such as:

- What kinds of stereotypes came up most often? (gender, race, age, etc.)

- What other kinds of stereotypes can you think of?

- Do you think these stereotypes are positive or negative? Why?

- How might stereotypes be linked to prejudice and discrimination?

5   CLOSURE:

Sentence completion
'Something I have learnt today is . . .'

Purpose:
consolidating learning, reflection and evaluation, useful feedback for the teacher / facilitator – (have the intended learning outcomes been met?), encouraging participation

Resources:
talking object – e.g. soft ball / bean bag

Pattern Ball
Purpose:
bringing the group together at the end of a potentially challenging session, helping to release any tension / heightened emotions through a physical and fun activity, concentration and co-operation skills

Resources:
talking object – e.g. soft ball / bean bag

6   EVALUATION / PLANNING AHEAD:

* This theme needs to be built up within a series of Circle Time sessions, and will need to be explored over a series of sessions in order to maximise learning and reflection.

** The time available is likely to depend on the length of class periods, so the content of this session could be divided over two sessions if need be. For example, you might focus the first session purely around definitions and the second around the feelings that might go with the experiences. This will also give pupils some time between sessions to think about their own experiences in preparation for the second session.

*** This outline provides ideas that might be suitable for secondary school pupils. However, there is a big difference between Year 8 and Year 14, so it does need to be adapted to suit the specific group of pupils with which you are working.

218

884

🔑

Outline Circle Time Session 4 [6]

<div style="background: pink;">

THEME / TITLE:
Values and Diversity

TIME AVAILABLE:
45 minutes

AGE GROUP:
Adult *

INTENDED LEARNING OUTCOMES:
- *To explore the values which underpin our work in schools*
- *To explore our attitudes to difference, and how this relates to our values*
- *To consider how we express our values in practice*

</div>

1   WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION:

Purpose:
sharing intended learning outcomes, encouraging everyone's participation

Reminder of Circle Time Rules

2   INTRODUCTORY GAME / ACTIVITY:

Name Game
'My name is … and I am … (positive adjective, starting with the same letter as name)' **

Purpose:
thinking, listening and concentration skills; getting to know each other

Resources:
talking object

It can be valuable to ask for a volunteer to start, and they choose which way around the circle to pass the talking object. However, as this is the first activity, it is appropriate for the facilitator to start in order to model the response. If the group is not too big, this can be used as a fun memory game, where people have to remember the names and adjectives of everyone who has gone before – the emphasis is on helping each other come up with adjectives and to remember.

Silent Statements Mixing Up Activity
Purpose:
gently splitting up any cliques, encouraging different people to work together, introducing the session's theme, opportunity to observe what some of the key interests / issues might be

When you call out a statement, everyone to whom it applies gets up and moves to another seat. They must not move to the seat on either side of them or, within that go, return to their own seat. Start with some fun statements, moving from the visual to things that cannot be seen – do not include statements that will only apply to one person. It can also be important to finish with a more light-hearted statement. As an alternative, you can take away a seat, and let the person left in the middle each time come up with the

219

next statement – if they are stuck, they can say, 'Everyone change places.' However, this does mean that you cannot determine the statements, although you can give some guidance as to the theme. Equally, you need to be aware of your group – this method may put some people under too much pressure and will, therefore, not be appropriate.

 For example:

- Everyone wearing red, change places

- Everyone who likes chocolate, change places

- Everyone who has been to the cinema in the last month, change places

- Everyone who thinks pupils should be involved in designing school / classroom rules, change places

- Everyone who thinks young people should be able to give feedback to a teacher after a lesson, change places

- Everyone who thinks that they have a responsibility to promote reconciliation in the school, change places

- Everyone who thinks they have a responsibility to challenge sectarian or racist comments or behaviour, change places

- Everyone who feels confident exploring controversial issues with pupils, change places

- Everyone who deliberately includes diversity issues within their lesson planning, change places

- Everyone who is looking forward to the holidays, change places

3   SENTENCE COMPLETION:

Pairs Discussion
Purpose:
to give people time to think and test ideas with a partner before sharing them in the large group, to enable people to talk about experiences they may have had without personalising them in the large group at this stage, to develop emotional literacy, particularly empathy, reflection and listening skills, to develop responsibility for self and own contribution

Resources:
talking object, flipchart / whiteboard, pens

Short discussion in pairs about some of the values which are important to me in my work in school.

Feedback to the large group, with each person sharing one value. These could be gathered on flipchart / whiteboard for future reference / discussion.

'A value which is important to me is ...'

886

**4 DISCUSSION FORUM /
SHARING MORE INFORMATION:**

School / Classroom Scenarios

Purpose:
to encourage people to think about how
their values translate into practice, sharing
and checking out ideas with colleagues,
self-reflection, problem-solving and commu-
nication skills

Resources:
scenario sheets

Divide the large group into groups of
approximately four people (mixing teachers
and non-teaching staff, if working with a
whole staff team). Give the groups a list of
scenarios to choose from (you will need to
draw this up in advance, based on the
situation in which you are working – see
following sheet for examples), and / or ask
them to come up with a situation which one
or more of them has experienced in school
of, for example, diversity or a controversial
issue, prejudice or discrimination, conflict, etc.

Ask the groups to think about how they would
respond to the situation in the light of their
own values / the values which have been
gathered on the flipchart / whiteboard. Ask
them to consider whether this is what they
would actually do.

Each group can then feed back to the large
group, and after a group has finished others
can share ideas / questions / etc.

5 CLOSURE:

Sentence Completion, for example,
'Something I have learnt today is ...';
'Some support / training I would like (in
relation to this theme) is ...'

Purpose:
consolidating learning, reflection and
evaluation, useful feedback for the facilitator
– (have the intended learning outcomes
been met?), encouraging participation

Resources:
talking object

6 EVALUATION / PLANNING AHEAD:

* This Circle Time is aimed at staff working in
schools, with some specific examples for
teachers. As well as adaptations needed to
suit your particular group, the content would
need to be adapted slightly for work with
governors, parents and others.

** Adjectives beginning with letters like 'K', 'Z',
etc. can be difficult, depending on linguistic
ability, and it is especially important to
encourage group members to help each other
with ideas. However, other introductory
sentence completions could be used instead,
for example, 'My name is . . . and something I
am good at is . . .'

221

Positive Approaches to Conflict Scenarios

1 The caretaker informs you that some of the girls in your class have been picking on another girl from the class at break and lunchtimes. This bullying has included name calling, excluding her from games and pushing past her when they are going back inside. The caretaker has spoken with them but it has had little effect.

How do you respond?

2 Among a group of boys who play football together, one of them is from a Chinese background. The other boys, who all come from White Northern Irish backgrounds, use racist language which they describe as 'a bit of a laugh' between mates, claiming, 'Sure, he knows it's just a joke'.

How do you respond?

3 You work in a maintained school which has a mainly Catholic staff. You notice that when politics or religion are discussed in the staff room the two Protestant members of staff don't participate, and often find a reason to leave the room.

or

You work in a controlled school which has a mainly Protestant staff. You notice that when politics or religion are discussed in the staff room the two Catholic members of staff don't participate and often find a reason to leave the room.

How do you respond?

4 You have been developing circle time in your classroom and have done a lot of work with your pupils around respectful relationships. In the corridor, you discover another member of staff yelling at one of your pupils in front of other pupils and staff, in a way which you feel is inappropriate.

How do you respond?

5 You are running a Schools Community Relations Programme (cross-community) event with your partner school. Some of the boys turn up wearing Rangers and Celtic tops. No one had told them not to, but you are aware of tensions within the group, and this comes to a head when you find two of the boys shouting sectarian abuse at each other while some of the others 'egg them on'.

How do you respond?

222

Appendix Four:
Exploring Controversial Issues in Early Years *

THEME / TITLE:
Exploring Diversity /
Building Positive Relationships

TIME AVAILABLE:
five sessions, 20 minutes each

AGE RANGE:
Foundation Stage / Key Stage One **

INTENDED LEARNING OUTCOMES:
- *To explore similarities and differences within the class group and beyond*
- *To develop respect for self and others*
- *To encourage positive relationships and empathy*
- *To explore positive ways of responding to conflict*

Session One: Making Our Classroom a Happy Place ***

1   WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION:

Purpose:
to think about how we can make our classroom a happy place for everyone, using Circle Time rules

Reminder of Circle Time Skills:
looking, listening, speaking, thinking, concentrating

2   INTRODUCTORY GAME / ACTIVITY:

Pass the Rain
Purpose:
concentration skills, awareness of others, co-operation and teamwork, encouraging the participation of all

Everyone holds their hands out in front of them, palms downwards, and wiggles their fingers. This is the rain. They put their hands back on their knees. The teacher / facilitator begins by wiggling her / his fingers and pointing them in the direction of the person on her / his right / left. This person wiggles her / his fingers in response, then turns to the person on her / his other side and 'passes the rain' on to her / him, continuing the whole way around the circle. As the children become familiar with the game, you can ask for a volunteer to start, rather than always beginning yourself.

223

3   SENTENCE COMPLETION
'I feel happy when . . .'

Purpose:
self-reflection, talking and listening skills, developing confidence, encouraging the participation of all

Resources:
talking object

4   DISCUSSION FORUM / SHARING MORE INFORMATION:

'Ideal Island' activity

Purpose:
co-operation and teamwork, creative thinking, decision-making, self-reflection, empathy

Resources:
A3 paper, crayons

Draw an outline of an island. Tell the children that you want them to imagine that they have all been shipwrecked together on this island (You can make a story of this, or do a guided meditation, if appropriate and not too scary!) and they are to imagine what the island is like - what would they really like to have on the island? What would make it a really special place? What might they need on the island? Either draw on, or invite different children who come up with ideas to draw on, the various things which are suggested.

Then talk together about the different rules they might need on their island so that everyone could enjoy it.

What similar rules might they need so that everyone can be happy in our classroom?

These can then be written / drawn on a poster, or represented by actions so that the children can be reminded of these when need be; for example, at the start of Circle Time sessions.

If it is appropriate, divide the children into small groups of approximately four people, and get them to draw their own maps. They can then explain them to the rest of the group, followed by the rules discussions.

5   CLOSURE:

Pass the Smile
Purpose:
awareness of each other, concentration skills, closing on a positive note

The teacher begins by turning to the person on her / his right / left and smiling at her / him, encouraging her / him to smile in response. S/he then turns to the person on the other side of her / him and smiles at her / him, and so it continues right around the circle. As the children become familiar with the game in future sessions, invite a volunteer to start off, instead of always beginning yourself.

Session Two:
Diversity in Our Classroom

1 WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION:

Purpose:
think about things which are the same / different about people in our class

**Reminder of Classroom
and Circle Time Rules / Skills**

2 INTRODUCTORY GAME / ACTIVITY:

Pass the Rain
Page 223

3 SENTENCE COMPLETION:
'Something I like about me is . . .'

Purpose:
self-reflection, talking and listening skills, developing confidence, encouraging the participation of all

**4 DISCUSSION FORUM /
SHARING MORE INFORMATION:**

Pairs Work ****
Purpose:
self-reflection, getting to know each other, talking and listening skills, building confidence in participation

Divide the children into pairs and ask them to find out two things that are the same about them and two things that are different.

Each pair then feeds back to the circle with one child saying the things that are the same, and the other saying the things that are different. This can be broadened into a more general discussion about the diversity in the class.

If you have more time, the children could draw pictures of the things that are the same and different, and use the pictures as the basis for their feedback to the circle.

3 CLOSURE:

Touch Fingers
Purpose:
awareness of each other, concentration skills, closing on a positive and calm note

Everyone sits quietly and holds out their pointer / index finger. The teacher / facilitator touches the end of her / his left index finger to the right index finger of the person on her / his right. S/he then touches her / his left index finger to the right index finger of the person on her / his right, and so on around the circle.

Again, as the children become familiar with the game, you can ask for a volunteer to start off rather than always beginning yourself.

225

Session Three:
What Makes a Good Friend?

1   WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION:

Purpose:
think about the things that make a good
friend, what do your friends do that make
you feel happy, what do you do to make your
friends happy?

**Reminder of Classroom
and Circle Time Rules / Skills**

2   INTRODUCTORY GAME / ACTIVITY:

'Simon Says'
Purpose:
concentration skills, physical co-ordination,
having fun together (ice-breaker)

The teacher / facilitator calls out instructions,
for example, 'Simon says, 'Touch your nose'',
'Simon says, 'Stand up,'' etc. If the instruction
does not have 'Simon says' at the start, the
children should not copy it. Don't put people
out if they get it wrong: the emphasis is on
having fun together as friends (as well as
developing listening and concentration skills).

3   SENTENCE COMPLETION:
'I am a good friend when I . . .'

Purpose:
self-reflection, empathy, talking and listening
skills, developing vocabulary around the
theme, encouraging the participation of all

Resources:
individual cards, flipchart

If the children are able to read, write these ideas
down on a flipchart page or on individual

cards in the middle of the circle as the children
suggest them so that they can see all of the
key words. Depending on the range of ideas
which have been suggested, you may want
to follow this up with a more general discussion.

**4   DISCUSSION FORUM /
SHARING MORE INFORMATION:**

'Good Friends' Figures
Purpose:
reinforcing new friendship vocabulary,
creativity, empathy, talking and listening skills

Resources:
A4 paper, crayons / pens, scissors

Depending on time and age group, either make
in advance or during the session, concertina
figures joined at the arms. (For example, fold
a piece of A4 paper in four, like a fan. Draw a
figure on the first section, with the arms
going to the edge. When you cut around it
and unfold the paper, you should have four
figures 'holding hands'.) Give each child a set
of figures (or get them to make their own)
and give them crayons to create four happy
friends. If they are able to, they can write one
of the key words of what makes a good friend
on each figure.

Each child can then show their figures to the
rest of the circle, maybe highlighting one key
word, or saying why the friends are happy.

5   CLOSURE:

Rainstorm
Page 213

Session Four:
Feeling Left Out

1   WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION:

Purpose:
what it feels like when we are left out or when someone laughs at us, perhaps because we are different from others or because they think we are different

**Reminder of Classroom
and Circle Time Rules / Skills**

2   INTRODUCTORY GAME / ACTIVITY:

Touch Fingers
Page 225

3   SENTENCE COMPLETION:
'Today I feel … because …'

Purpose:
self-reflection, talking and listening skills, developing confidence, encouraging the participation of all, developing a vocabulary around the theme

**4   DISCUSSION FORUM /
SHARING MORE INFORMATION:**

Using Puppets
Purpose:
self-reflection, empathy, problem-solving, critical and creative thinking, conflict resolution skills

Resources:
puppets

Use hand puppets to create a story about a situation where one of the puppets is

laughed at / left out of a game by another. Ask the children, for example:

- *How does the puppet who is left out / laughed at feel?*
- *How does the other puppet feel?*
- *How might the two puppets sort it out / make friends again?*
- *If they find this difficult, who might be able to help?*

If you have more time, the children could make their own puppets (for example, finger puppets, stick puppets, wooden spoon puppets, etc.) and make up their own stories in small groups, which they could then perform for the rest of the class. This could then be followed by a discussion based on questions similar to those above.

5   CLOSURE:

Mexican Wave in the circle

Purpose:
awareness of each other, co-operation and teamwork, concentration skills, closing on a positive note

227

Session Five:
Affirmation *****

1 WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION:

Purpose:
to think back over the things we have learnt over the past few weeks in Circle Time

**Reminder of Classroom
and Circle Time Rules / Skills**

2 INTRODUCTORY GAME / ACTIVITY:

'Simon Says'
Page 226

3 SENTENCE COMPLETION:
'Something I enjoyed doing (in the last four sessions) was . . .'

Purpose:
self-reflection, talking and listening skills, developing confidence, encouraging the participation of all, evaluation

**4 DISCUSSION FORUM /
SHARING MORE INFORMATION:**

Elmer [7]
Purpose:
self and group reflection, assimilating learning, affirmation, creativity

Resources:
Elmer book

Read the story, Elmer, and use it to draw out from the children some of the key things they have learnt over the past four sessions about diversity / differences and building positive relationships / being a good friend. Get each child to imagine they are one of

Elmer's elephant friends – give them a piece of paper and get them to draw their elephant with the colourful design they would wear on the special Elmer day. They can then show their picture to the rest of the group, and the pictures can be displayed afterwards.

5 CLOSURE:

Sentence completion
'Something important I have learnt is . . .'

Purpose:
self-reflection, evaluation, assimilation learning, talking and listening skills

'Electric Shock'
Page 215

228   **7** McKee, D. (1990), Elmer: The Story of a Patchwork Elephant, London, Red Fox.

894

* This series of sessions uses Circle Time as its structure. For information on the purpose and process of Circle Time, please see Section Five (Working in a Circle).

** As this is a general outline, it will need to be adapted to the specific age group with which you are working, and to the particular needs of the group. Sessions may need to be shortened or lengthened, activities may need to be adjusted, etc. However, it is always important to include sufficient time for introduction and closure, and to 'warm up' to more challenging topics. Some activities may need to be simplified or an alternative chosen for Foundation Stage groups.

*** The Circle Time sample outline given for Foundation Stage / KS1 (page 212) could be used as an additional session after this introductory session.

**** Ideally, this exercise will draw out in a natural way diversity such as ethnicity, (dis)ability, etc. within the class. If these do not emerge from the children's initial ideas, try to draw them out through further discussion, not in a way which creates issues, but which affirms the value of diversity within the class, and the uniqueness of each person.

***** If you have more time, it would be valuable to begin to look at specific kinds of diversity within and beyond the classroom and in the community. As well as further Circle Times picking up these themes, you could go out for a walk in the community, invite some older people in to do a session around games that they played as children, look at other cultures and religious festivals, do some work on flags and symbols, etc.

229

Exploring Diversity at Key Stage Two

TIME AVAILABLE:
Four week Programme for a SCRP Link
(Schools Community Relations Programme which is administered through the Education and Library Boards funded by the Department of Education Community Relations Branch)

The programme must have clear aims and objectives related to the promotion of the community relations dimension of Education for Mutual Understanding and must have clear learning objectives which can be monitored and evaluated.

NB: Each session could last three hours but the content can be changed to accommodate the time available. The programme can also be adapted for a single class.

AGE RANGE:
KS3 (8 – 11 year olds)

INTENDED LEARNING OUTCOMES:
- *To explore similarities and differences*
- *To develop respect for self and others*
- *To explore personal identity*
- *To learn about aspects of difference*
- *To encourage healthy relationships within the class and with the other class*

PROGRAMME PROCESS:
Mixture of small group discussions / physical games and learning about each other.

Session One: Ice-breaker

This Session is to encourage co-operation and teamwork, encourage those within the group to get to know each other on a personal level, to learn names, etc.

1   INTRODUCTORY GAME / ACTIVITY:

Parachute Games

Purpose:
to mix the group and to encourage individuals to come out of friendship groups

Resources
parachute

Time:
20 – 25 minutes

The group holds the parachute with both hands at chest height. A person will be asked to state something that is true about her / himself, for example, 'I am wearing black shoes', or 'I watch Eastenders'. If that statement is true for other people in the group, they walk under the parachute and go directly opposite to where they are standing.

Debrief:
The game is designed to help participants think about how people in the room can be very different or similar to themselves.

It is important to stress that it is OK to be different and that this is what can make life more interesting and healthy.

230

Human Bingo

Purpose:
to encourage participants to make contact with as many people as they can in a limited time

Resources:
human bingo sheets, pens

Time:
20 minutes

Participants are given a sheet with 15 boxes. In each box is a statement such as 'Find someone who goes to a different school than you', 'Find someone who plays football' etc. Participants have to get the signature of the person for which the statement is true. They are not allowed to have anyone's signature more than once, so they have to find 15 different people if they are to fill their sheet. Be aware of group members who may be shy or have difficulty writing and help them if necessary.

Debrief:
Encouraging people to think about difference and commonalties. Acknowledge that it is not always easy to talk to someone you do not know, but when you do, it can be rewarding.

Personal contracts

Purpose:
to encourage people to think about what they would like to get from the programme, what is expected from them and what they hope / expect from others in the group

Resources:
sticky shapes, card, flipchart sheets, pens etc.

Time:
20 – 30 minutes

The group will be divided into small groups of approximately four people. Everyone in the group will be given a piece of card and some brightly coloured crayons / markers. In groups of two to four they will write a rule or something important for the programme to make it fun, safe and memorable. Use different sticky shapes to decorate their contract.

The cards will be kept for the rest of the programme and displayed in the venue / classroom. The group can be asked to sign the cards they made to help them to get a sense of making and keeping a contract.

Blobs

Purpose:
to generate energy, work in small groups, teamwork and co-operation

Time:
15 minutes

The group is asked to form blobs based on a number, colour and theme called out. A 'blob' is a cluster of people touching each other. Examples: form blobs of six people, of the colour blue, of those with 'a' in their name etc.

2   SESSION EVALUATION

Sample questions for group feedback:
- *Did you meet someone you didn't know?*
- *Would you come back?*

Session Two:
Personal Identity

This aim of this sessions is to learn about others and ourselves in a positive way

Grand National

Purpose:
to have fun together, to improve concentration, to explore other means of communication, teamwork and co-operation

Time:
5 minutes

For the next five minutes everyone is a horse in the Grand National! Instructions for the leader to call out and actions for the participants to carry out are as follows:

Canter
Everyone taps their own legs lightly & slowly

Gallop
More speed tapping own legs

Left
Turn to person on left and tap their knees

Right
Turn to person on right and tap their knees

Jump
Jump out of seat like jumping a hurdle

Double jump
Same only twice in quick succession

Water jump
Jump, and hold you nose on the way down

Rickety bridge
Rattle over a bridge – with sound effects

Photo finish
Smile for camera, and say 'cheese'

Fruit Salad

Purpose:
to have fun together, appropriate competitiveness, mixing activity

Time:
10 minutes

Everyone in the group is given the name of a fruit: apple, orange or banana, etc. There is a chair less than the total number of people in the group. The person without a seat will stand in the middle and shout out a fruit. For example, when s/he shouts 'bananas' all bananas must leave their seat and run for a new one. The person left without a seat is then in the middle. Later in the game introduce 'fruit salad' - this means everyone in the group must get up and find themselves a new seat.

Rules:
You cannot get up and sit on the seat immediately to your left or right.

Health and safety:
Remind everyone to keep an eye on moving chairs, to be aware of each other and not to run so fast that it becomes unsafe.

Secret orchestra

Purpose:
to encourage teamwork and co-operation

Time:
15 – 20 minutes

The group stands in a circle and two people are taken outside the room. One person will be nominated to lead the rest of the group in performing simple actions that can be done without breaking the shape of the circle, for example, patting head, clapping hands, hopping on the spot etc. After every twenty seconds or so, the action will have to be changed by the leader. After the leader has been nominated, that person will begin leading the actions and the people outside the room will be invited back into the circle. It is the task of these two people to work out who the leader of the group is. The task of the leader is to wait until the attention of the detectives is off her / him, then change the actions - in other words s/he will be trying hard not to be caught. The task of the rest of the group is to follow the leader's actions subtly, so that the leader is not caught. The detectives have three chances to guess correctly and the game repeats as many times as appropriate.

NB. The two detectives should be encouraged to work closely together and talk about their guesses together before making them.

Same Difference:

Purpose:
to explore and acknowledge personal differences

Resources:
pens / paper

Time:
20 – 30 minutes

Pupils will be assigned into small working groups as balanced (for example, gender, ability, mix from the different schools) as possible. In these groups the pupils will have a set time (three to five minutes) to list all the things that they have in common. This can take into consideration everything about themselves, broad or specific, i.e. they are all human, in primary schools, all living in ..., etc.

They will also have the same set time to come up with all the things that make them different from each other, i.e. they may all have different birthdays, they may all have a different number of brothers / sisters etc.

Debrief:
Pupils will be encouraged to think about what they have in common. Ask about their differences: what sort of things did they come up with? Encourage the pupils to think about why these differences are important to them. Sometimes people are only encouraged to think about what they have in common but difference is really important too.

And it's OK to be different!
Get them to think about how boring life would be if everyone thought the same way, supported the same football team, was the same religion and wanted to be the same things when they grew up. Would they rather all be exactly the same or have differences from one person to the next?

233

People Jigsaws

Purpose:
personal development, self-awareness, teamwork and co-operation

Resources:
coloured card, markers / crayons

Time:
1 hour

Pupils will work in their small groups for this activity. Everyone will be given materials for this exercise including markers, crayons, coloured paper, etc.

First of all, people will be asked to pick one of their favourite colours. This will make up one quarter of their flag colour. Their name will go over this first coloured card. See diagram for clarification.

Pupils will then pick three words that describe them best, for example, friendly, patient, sporty, nice, happy, funny, etc. These should be qualities they see in themselves or that other people have pointed out to them. Instead of using the words, they have to think of a shape or an object that best describes the word.

Next, they should pick another three colours that would best go behind these words, something that they feel stands for the qualities. For example, if they feel they are friendly, maybe a bright colour like yellow or white would suit, or if they are sporty, a darker, more striking colour would be good, like red or blue. The pupils will write or stencil the words on the appropriate colour of card.

They should now have four pieces of coloured card that will make up the whole of their flag.

The flags will now hopefully represent them in some small way. They will be encouraged in their small groups to present their flags to the rest of the group and explain their shapes, colours, etc.

Debrief:
Show the group your appreciation, for taking the time to do the flags and recognise the hard work they put into the exercise. The flag helps to describe them as individuals and what they are proud of.

John (shape**)**	**Sporty (**shape**)**
Patient (shape**)**	**Helpful (**shape**)**

Session Three:
Symbols

Palm trees

Purpose:
use as a 'loosening up' exercise, to get the group working as a team and using listening skills

Time:
15 minutes

The group stands in a circle. A volunteer will stand in the middle of the circle and point to someone. S/he can shout 'elephant', 'palm tree' or 'rabbit'. The person in the middle must make up the body of whichever object is called out, with the people either side making up the outer parts. For example, if 'palm tree' is called out, the person pointed to must raise her / his arms upward, and the people either side must form the branches. If they do not do the right action, the person in the middle of the object will come into the middle of the circle and nominate someone new. Try to play the game at speed, as it's a bit more fun.

Flags and Symbols

Purpose:
to explore myths and realities about flags and symbols, to explore people's feelings about flags and symbols

Resources:
flags, football jerseys etc.

Time:
30 minutes

The facilitators will present the group with the main flags of Northern Ireland / the Republic of Ireland (the Irish Tricolour, the Union Jack, the Ulster flag and possibly the Ulster provincial flag) and the European flag. You could also include Celtic, Rangers, Linfield tops, an Ulster rugby jersey and various sports supporters' scarves. The pupils will have five to ten minutes to look at the flags / symbols and discuss / write down what they feel they already know of them. The group will get the chance to handle the flags and see them up close. After the pupils feed back their information in the bigger group, the facilitators will then spend a little more time giving some more background information on the flags, including why the specific flag colours were chosen.

Debrief:
- *What did we know about the flags?*
- *Where did we get our information from?*
- *Was our information accurate?*
- *Where can we find correct information?*
- *Where do we normally see these flags?*
- *What feelings did the flags raise for me?*

Wishing Tree

Purpose:
exploring aspirations

Resources:
willow branches, planting pots, light bulb shapes, star shapes

Time:
30 – 40 minutes

The willow branches and planting pots will make up the 'trees'. Each person will be given a cut-out of a light bulb and a star. The light bulb will have space to follow on from the sentence, 'One wish I have for my school is....' The star will have, 'If I had one wish for the future, it would be....'

Pupils will work in two mixed groups at a tree each. After filling in their cut-outs, they will go and hang them on the branch of a tree. Each school will be able to take the trees back to their class and maybe display them in their room or at the reception area of both schools. Pupils might want to share what they wrote or they can be given time to walk around the trees to read what everyone else has written.

235

Session Four:
Closing Activity

Spiders Web

Purpose:
to refresh group knowledge of names, to draw on the themes of teamwork and make new 'connections' within a group

Resources:
ball of string

Time:
20 minutes

The group will stand in a tight circle. The first person will be holding the beginning of a ball of string and will call out a name of someone s/he knows from the other school and something s/he likes about her / him. S/he then passes the ball of string to that individual. This person then calls out another name and says something s/he likes about that person and passes the string to her / him, the game continues until everyone in the group has had their name called out.

Debrief:
The string should make the shape of a spider's web and there are themes that can be drawn from this:

• The web is held together by hundreds of tiny silk threads and if one or two threads break, the web cannot do its job as well as it might. This relates to teamwork and everyone participating in the activities if the group is to get the most from it.

• Everything is connected in the web. Hopefully by the end of the programme people will have made new connections or friendships within the group. At the least, they will have met some people they did not know before and got to know them a little better.

Pass the hand-clap

Purpose:
to encourage teamwork and co-operation

Time:
5 minutes

The group stands in a circle. An individual will be nominated as the first person, and will start the hand-clap and they will 'pass' the clap around the group in a clockwise direction. This means that the person next to her / him claps as quickly as s/he can after the previous person. The clap must pass around the group without anyone missing her / his go, and the exercise is timed by a leader. See how fast s/he can get it down to with four to five attempts!

Evaluation
Time:
10 minutes

In small groups the individuals are asked to reflect on a number of questions such as:

• *What was useful about this programme?*
• *What would make it better for the next year group?*

236

Exploring Identity at Secondary Level

TIME AVAILABLE:
Four week programme

AGE RANGE:
KS3+

INTENDED LEARNING OUTCOMES: •
- *To explore the factors which shape our identity*
- *To reflect on how labels and judgements contribute to prejudices*
- *To explore and learn about prejudices*

Session One

This sessions aim is to develop and prepare the group for teamwork, communication and being facilitated rather than taught

This session could be divided into two comprising forty minutes each, the natural break after paper tower exercise.

Name Game
Purpose:
exploring identity, getting to know each other, sharing personal history

Time:
10 minutes

Ask each student to say their name and what they know about their name, why they were called their name, was their name chosen for a specific individual in the family etc.

Warp Speed
Purpose:
concentration skills, teamwork and co-operation, creative problem-solving

Resources:
soft ball / bean bag

Time:
5 – 10 minutes

The group is asked to stand in a circle and to pass the ball to each person in the group shouting the name of the person the ball is being thrown to. The object of the game is for everybody to touch the ball and say the respective names in the fastest time.

Eventually someone should come up with the idea of not doing it in a circle but, for example, in a line, rolling the ball between their legs.

237

Line Up

Purpose:

team building and co-operation, non-verbal communication skills

Time:

30 – 40 minutes

The group are asked without speaking to form a line with the smallest person at one end and the tallest at the other. It is important that the group are encouraged not to speak. You can give the group several minutes to decide how they might complete the task.

Variations of this:

Ask the group to line up depending on the month they were born - so January at one end and December at the other end. Alphabetical line using the first letter of their first name. age, shoe size etc.

'And I Thought I Knew You!'

Purpose:

to allow participants to be more comfortable with disclosure, to give space to all participants to speak

Resources:

pens, paper

Time:

10 minutes

Group members are given a few minutes to write down three things about themselves they think no one in the room knows. Pieces of paper are folded, collected and re-distributed at random. A piece of paper is then read out by one of the participants and everyone tries to guess who it belongs to. Eventually the culprit identifies her / himself to the group. As participants are often quite open in this activity some closure may be required.

Paper Tower

Purpose:

team building, creative problem-solving

Resources:

newspapers, sellotape

Time:

15 – 20 minutes

The group is split into teams of three. Each group is given newspapers and sellotape and are given the instructions 'to make a free standing tower made with only paper and sellotape, and it has to be as high as possible'.

Debrief:

- *How did individuals complete the task?*
- *Who came up with the design?*
- *Was everyone involved?*
- *Were everyone's ideas heard?*
- *Was there a natural leader?*
- *How were decisions made?*

Session Two

Counting to 20

Purpose
to encourage the group to work together as a team; to improve communication within the group

Time:
5 – 10 minutes

The group sits / stands in a circle. As a group, the aim is to count to 20. There are two rules:

• No person is allowed to speak after the person sitting either side of her / him.

• Two people cannot call out the same number at the same time.

If these rules are broken, the count restarts at one. If someone has played the game before, ask her / him not to tell the group the solutions.

Debrief:
• *How did people know when to speak?*
• *What signals were people watching for?*

Trust Exercise **

Purpose:
to explore the value of trust and to reflect on how it can be developed within the group

Resources:
blindfolds if possible

Time:
10 minutes

In pairs, one person is 'A' and the other 'B'.

OPTION ONE
A closes her / his eyes and is led around the room avoiding others and obstacles by B, placing their hands on A's shoulder. B should

reassure A about the environment. Switch so that both have had the experience. The space the group has to move around is limited, for example, you may move chairs around to make a confined space for the group to work in. *Highlight health & safety considerations!*

OPTION TWO
Again, one person is A and the other is B. A has to lead B around by hooking fingers with her / his and avoiding others and obstacles. Switch so that both have had the experience.

OPTION THREE
Again, one person is A and the other is B. A closes her / his eyes and is led about the confined space. When you shout, 'Stop,' B moves to find another partner whilst all the As keep their eyes closed. You shout, 'Stop' again and B moves again to another A. Then the exercise is repeated with the As leading and the Bs with their eyes closed.

Debrief:
• *How did it feel to be 'blind' and to have to trust another person?*
• *Did you open your eyes at any time? Why?*
• *Did your partner make you feel safe?*
• *What was it like to have different partners?*
• *How was the trust built between you and your partner?*
• *In talking about yourself in a group, what do you need to feel you can trust the group?*

Using the last debrief question write up some of the points the young people stated and remind the group that these are something to work towards.

Contract ***

Purpose:

a set of ground rules for people to consider and remember when working with each other, it aims to provide boundaries within which the group can feel comfortable

Resources:

flipchart, markers

Before the contract, ask individuals to identify any of their hopes and fears regarding the day. What people expect gives you an idea of interests, and the fears will give you an idea of what could be done to make people comfortable.

Review

The group are encouraged to reflect in small groups or individually:

- *What did they find useful about the previous two sessions?*
- *What did they learn about each other?*
- *What did they enjoy about the sessions?*
- *What would they change?*

The feedback can be recorded by you and is a useful way of reviewing the process.

Session Three:
Identity

All Change

Purpose:

warm up activity and to lift energy

The group sit on chairs in a circle with you as teacher / facilitator standing in the middle. The purpose is for the person in the middle to say, for example, 'anyone with jeans change places' however individuals cannot move immediately to her /his right / left when they move.

It is useful to encourage individuals to think of invisible features such as believing in God; liking / disliking something; thinking integrated education is a good idea; cannabis should be legalised etc.

Possible statements: "All change if you ...'

- *have met a politician*
- *have hair*
- *watch the news*
- *go to church*
- *like pizza*
- *have been involved in a cross-community project*
- *like your name*
- *been to America*
- *have a wish for your country*
- *own a pet*
- *want to do something for N.I.*
- *know whom you would vote for*
- *liked school*
- *want to be on T.V.*
- *vote*
- *enjoy sport*

906

Paper not Floor

Purpose:
to encourage individuals to work as a team, to encourage individuals to problem-solve

Resources:
newspaper

Lay out enough sheets of newspaper for the entire group in the room to comfortably stand upon. Facilitator explains that there is one rule.

All participants have to simultaneously be in contact with the paper but not in contact with the floor. Inevitably the group all stand on the paper provided. Facilitators should check that no part of anyone's foot is touching the floor. Once the group has successfully completed this, the facilitator asks individuals to get off the paper then takes the paper away. This is repeated until the group has difficulty standing on paper.

Health and Safety:
Remember that sitting on someone's shoulder is not allowed, because, in doing so, they are not in contact with the paper.

They cannot use any furniture so push the group to achieve the task.

The solution is for all group members to be holding one piece of paper between them and jump in the air at the same time.

Debrief:
- *How did the group reach a solution?*
- *Were everyone's ideas heard?*
- *Who found the task frustrating?*
- *Did anyone think the exercise was impossible?*

Variety is the Spice of Life:

Purpose:
to encourage participants to value diversity

Resources:
paper, pens

Time:
20 minutes

Divide the group into small groups and ask them to list as many things which make the group different. Below are some examples, which you can mention to stimulate examples.

- *For each colour of hair*
- *For each different BT Number*
- *For each different school attended*
- *For membership of each different uniformed / youth organisation*
- *For each different religious denomination represented*
- *For each different football team supported*
- *For each different favourite sports personality*
- *For each different favourite hobby*
- *For each different nationality represented*

241

Commonalities

Purpose:
to discover how much participants have in common

Resources:
paper, pens

Time:
10 minutes

Break larger group into small group to instil some competition. Teams get one point for everything they write down that each person in their group has in common. They must not be visible commonalities, for example, colour of shoes. Inform teams that there are big bonuses for the most unique and funny commonalities.

Debrief:
- *Which list was easier to put together?*
- *Are people more comfortable with differences or similarities?*

Session Four:
Prejudice Awareness ****

Not up my Street ***** 8

Purpose:
to explore how prejudices are part of life, to reflect on how we make generalisations that can lead to prejudices being formed

Resources:
paper, pens, flipchart

Time:
30 – 40 minutes

The key element of this exercise is the process the young people engage in; that is, how they make their decisions, what did they find themselves saying in relation to judgements they were making about the individuals in the exercise.

- Explain to the whole group that a house in their street has become vacant. The local council has decided that they will consult with the resident's i.e. you, on who should be allocated the house as they have eight prospective tenants.

- You have been given a list of eight people with limited information at this point and have been asked to rank from one to eight people you feel should be given the house individually.

8 Exercise developed by John Doherty.

- In small groups (five to six) ask them to come up with a group ranking using the information on each prospective tenant. This may take some time as individuals will have to negotiate and make compromises.

- The group feed back their choices and these are noted on flipchart paper.

- Then each group are given additional information on each tenant.

- Ask the groups to reconsider their ranking based on the new knowledge.

- The groups feed back their reconsidered lists and these are noted on the flipchart.

Debrief:
- *How easy were the tasks?*
- *What were your initial assumptions?*
- *Was this information based on knowledge or perceptions?*
- *As a complete group reflect on the ranking and check if there is a comparison between the first and second lists on the flipchart?*
- *With the new information did people change their lists – why?*
- *Why do we make judgements based on limited knowledge?*
- *Why is it helpful to gain more knowledge before making judgements?*
- *How and why do we label people?*

PROFESSIONS OF PROSPECTIVE TENANTS:

Reformed Drug Dealer

Unemployed Youth

Retired Bank Manager

Member of the Orange Order

Gay Nurse

Head Teacher

Sinn Fein Councillor

Refugee from Eastern Europe

243

INFORMATION ON PROSPECTIVE TENANTS:

Reformed Drug Dealer

Helen is aged 47, and was a heroin and cocaine addict for ten years while living in Belfast. She has now been 'clean' for the past ten years, and for the past five years she has been working as an Education Officer with the Health Promotion Agency. She wishes to move to your area because she has been offered a job in the local Drug Rehabilitation Unit.

Unemployed Youth

Gary is aged 19, and was recently made unemployed after serving a two year apprenticeship as a joiner. He wishes to move to your area as a couple of new developments have started in the neighbouring town and he believes he might be able to get some work there. He also feels he might be able to help his neighbours out by doing a few odd jobs.

Retired Bank Manager

Susan is aged 52, and was recently asked to take early retirement because she was involved in fraud at her branch. Her employers did not want the case splashed all over the newspapers so they agreed to give her early retirement. She now wishes to start a new life in your area and get involved in a scheme to provide financial advice to her new neighbours.

Member of the Orange Order

William is aged 74, and has been a member of the Orange Order since he was 21. He follows in a proud family tradition that has spanned generations of his family. He has been very concerned in recent years about the Orange Order's policy in not working more closely with residents' groups. He has always had excellent relationships with his Catholic neighbours. His wife, Gladys, died recently and he now wishes to move into your street to be closer to his son, Tom, who is one of your neighbours.

Gay Nurse

Jim is aged 22, and has lived with his parents until recently. He told them that he was gay and while his parents did not ask him to leave, he felt that he could not live there any longer. Jim works in the hospital in the nearest large town and is soon to gain promotion. He is a trained paramedic and has advanced First Aid training.

Head Teacher

Mary is aged 47, and has just left her job because of allegations that she has assaulted a pupil. A vacancy has come up in the local high school and she is considering applying for the job.

Sinn Fein Councillor

Frankie is 36, and has a young family. He decided to get involved in Politics three years ago and felt that Sinn Fein best represented his political views. He has always been active in the community, and has been very successful in helping elderly people access cold weather payments and in helping young people to fill out job application forms. Recently, he was elected as a councillor for your area and politicians on all sides speak very highly of his tireless work for the community.

Refugee from Eastern Europe

Rudi is 57, and has recently come to Ireland from the conflict in Kosovo. Rudi is a Serb and was the manager of the local factory in his town. He had to escape because his factory was burnt down by the local Albanians after Nato troops liberated the town. Nobody knows why the factory was burnt and there are stories that Rudi had moved most of his money out of the country. For now he is a refugee and needs somewhere to live.

244

Session Five:
Labelling / Perceptions

The aim of this session is to explore how we make assumptions, to understand how our perceptions influence our decisions

Perception Exercises

Purpose:
to highlight that we will see many things differently because of how we interpret information. These interpretations are because of who we are, where we were brought up, our histories etc.

Time:
10 minutes

OPTION ONE

The group is told that a statement will be written onto a flipchart sheet and they will be asked to read it and count the number of 'Fs' in the statement. They will only be able to see the information for just a minute. Write this on the flipchart:

'Finished files are the final result of years and years of scientific study'.

Once they have read the statement ask participants to take a place in the room, based on the number of 'F's. For example, each corner is given the following numbers three, four, five, six.

Once they have taken a place ask them how confident they are about their decision? Did they follow another person because they thought s/he might be right? Could they convince another person that they are 'wrong'? What does it feel like to be told you are wrong?

After the discussion let the participants see the information again so they can count the 'Fs'. Remind participants it is not about getting it right or wrong but about understanding how we see the same message differently.

Follow this exercise with another perception exercise, again following the same process and review. Individuals are given a pen and piece of paper and asked to follow the instructions in Option two / three and once they have completed the task, it is useful to draw a few of the examples on to the flipchart.

Then again use the debrief questions to discuss - was someone right or wrong; why did we do things differently if we were all given the same information?

OPTION TWO
Read this out:
Fold an A4 sheet of paper in half; tear off the right-hand corner; unfold it; tear off the left-hand corner; show it to others in your group.

OPTION THREE
Read this out:
Draw a 2cm line across your page. Take the first letter of your first name and the first letter of your second name and write them on either side of the line.

Reflection
Ask the group to reflect on the following areas:

- *What do people say about your school and the pupils attending the school?*
- *Are these labels fair, accurate?*
- *How can the school and you change these perceptions?*

245

Session Six:
Cultural Awareness

Human Knot

Purpose:
trust, team building and co-operation, problem-solving

In a circle, ask an even number of people to close their eyes. Stretching their right hand across the circle, ask them to find another hand. Repeat this with their left hand when they open their eyes without letting go. The group has to untie their Human Knot and get back into a circle.

Remind people it is possible.

Debrief:
- *Did the group work together?*
- *Did anyone give up?*
- *Who took the lead?*

Cultural Quiz ******

Purpose:
to reflect on symbols, to explore knowledge and attitudes, to identify myths

Resources:
cultural quiz sheet

Time:
5 – 10 minutes

A sheet of symbols is passed around participants. This exercise can be done as a quiz. Individuals can be put into small teams and given five to ten minutes to identify what each symbol is; where they might see it; what they know about it and what they do not know; what makes them feel comfortable / uncomfortable?

Debrief
- *Where did we get our information?*
- *How do we get our information?*
- *Is it useful to know more about symbols?*
- *Do people feel more comfortable with some and less with others?*
- *Can symbols be shared in Northern Ireland?*

246

911

912

Cultural Object *******

Purpose:
to explore personal identity, to share personal histories

Resources:
cultural object of individual's choice

Time:
20 minutes

Individuals are asked to bring in an object, which represents something from their community. (If someone has not brought one they could have a few minutes to draw their symbol - something they see often / not.)

It might be best to allow individuals to share object in pairs or in smaller groups; but the purpose of this is to support each person to talk about the object, what it means to them and if they know any of the history of the object. You could encourage individuals to ask each other questions, but ensure people don't criticise each other and their object.

Debrief
This can be done in pairs or threes and recorded for the evaluation of the programme:

- *Which symbol did they know nothing about?*
- *Which symbol do they know something about now?*
- *What is the benefit of learning about symbols?*

Press Release

Purpose:
teamwork and co-operation skills, communication skills, sharing experiences and personal aspirations, critical reflection on the role of symbols

Resources:
paper, pens, cartoon board

Time:
10 minutes

Ask the group to divide into smaller groups, the task is to design a press release or a mime as a group, which will answer questions from other countries about symbols in Northern Ireland.

In the press release let the countries know:

- *What symbols mean in Northern Ireland*
- *The role symbols play in Northern Ireland*
- *As young people, the relevance of symbols in your life*
- *What is a good response when symbols cause conflict?*
- *Why can they cause conflict?*

Each group present their mime / press release / cartoon board and as a group agree one thing they would like to be said about symbols on behalf of the school.

247

Symbols in Northern Ireland

An extra exercise if you feel it is useful or if the young people are reluctant to talk about the symbol they brought.

Purpose:
to explore some of the symbols / emblems of identity in Northern Ireland

Resources:
pack of symbol cards; (refer to the template at end of this section)

• Place pupils into small groups and distribute a pack of the symbol cards (face down) to each pupil. Ask pupils to turn over one card [9] from the top of the pack and place it in front of them. The cards may need to be explained.

• They should then turn over a second card and compare it with the first. If they think that there is a connection between the cards then they should start to form a cluster. (For example, they might connect a flute to the Union flag or connect the flute to a bodhran; it's up to them! There's no right or wrong answer- this exercise is about exploring how pupils perceive the symbols). If there is no connection then they should place the new card a distance away from the first. (For example, a crucifix and a rugby ball may be placed apart.)

• They should continue to turn over cards, adding more to their clusters or swapping cards into other clusters or breaking their clusters into sub-clusters! [10] (For example, religious symbols might be sub-divided etc.)

• When pupils have settled on their groupings, ask them to give each cluster a 'name', for example, 'music'.

• Ask each group to show the rest of the class their clusters and to explain why they have clustered the cards in this way.

• Use pupil feedback to introduce the idea of identity in Northern Ireland being religious (for example, ashes, cross etc.), cultural (for example, music, dance, language) and political (for example, national identity, political parties etc.).

CONCLUSION:
Ask pupils to identify which symbols of identity cause the most difficulty in Northern Ireland. Which symbols are used to annoy / antagonise 'others'? How are they used? Is it always just about religion? Or are religious, cultural and political issues 'mixed up together'? During the discussion, pupils will most likely mention the term 'sectarianism'. Use the discussion to define this term.

9 Pupils should only reveal one card at a time. This will help them to develop their own framework of connections between symbols.

248

Session Seven:
Reflection and Recap

The programme focused on a number of areas and we want the young people to reflect on these creatively and remind ourselves of what we achieved today:

- *Team building / Group*
- *Prejudice: Perceptions / Labelling / Judgements*
- *Perceptions of your school*
- *Symbols: their role in this society*

Using leaf outline ask participants to reflect individually on and write down or draw their thought on the leaves, which will be collated and used as a display for the school:

On a leaf write / draw a symbol which is important to me and why?

On a leaf write / draw what you feel we need to challenge?

EVALUATION

Another option is to use a designed sheet which will highlight the learning for the programme.

* This series of sessions uses Circle Time as a structure. For information on the purpose and process of Circle Time, please see Section Five (Working in a Circle).

As this is a general outline, you will need to adapt the content to the ability of the group and the needs that the group presents. Sessions may need to be shortened or lengthened and activities may need to be adjusted; please feel free to use what you think will work for the group.

You will note the first session concentrates on a number of warm-up activities, this is important as it enables you to get to know the group and what would work in your context. These activities are also important as it ensures that safety has been developed within the group especially as some of the sessions will focus on sensitive issues.

** Trust exercises are important in a group as they can support an open discussion on what the concept of trust means generally and in particular within the group. The exercises support the individuals to explore what trust will mean in their group, which is important in building the safety within the group.

*** The contract is important as it supports the group members to take responsibility for themselves and the group. Most classes have group rules displayed, it is important that these do not become filled with 'Don'ts' and a positive approach to behaviour is taken. Often the contract is linked with expectations and when individuals have described their expectations this can be followed with what we need to do to achieve this, i.e. the group as a whole and as an individual.

**** This exercise provides a gentle introduction into the concept of prejudice. It is important

10 Encourage pupils to keep their clusters fairly small (for example, no more than six or seven items in a cluster). This will encourage more creative thinking.

249

915

to encourage participants to recognise that this is a natural process for all humans as it is not possible to manage the amount of information, which we receive on an hourly basis. It is also important to support individuals not to feel ashamed about their differences.

***** This explores the concept of prejudice in more depth. Encourage individuals not to censor themselves. The key to the exercise is not the actual exercise but rather the process of how the groups made their decisions, what information they used to work out their ranking. You should encourage the group to reflect on how they made their decisions, did they compromise for example?

****** There is a range of ways of using symbols with a group, you can collect a range of symbols, use pictures of symbols, use the internet or encourage individuals to bring in their own symbols, emblems.

******* An important health warning, if young people are encouraged to bring in their symbols please notify other staff members so that there is a whole school understanding of the reasons. If flags are brought in remind the pupils to respect the flag and not to have it wrapped around their body. Also for transport home ensure that the young people put their symbol away safely for their own safety.

As the facilitator you should spend some time becoming familiar with the meanings behind flags and the historical significance of symbols / emblems.

Symbol Clustering Cards [11]

SYMBOLS IN NORTHERN IRELAND
Page 248
The following cards can be used as templates to make your own set or may be enlarged on a photocopier and cut out.

Claddagh Ring

Rugby Ball

Fainne

IRA Mural

Shamrock

St Patrick

SDLP

Ashes

Cu Chullain

251

Easter Lily

St Bridget's Cross

Ulster Flag

Lambeg Drum

Red Hand

Sash

Cross

Stormont

Ulster Scots

Policeman

252

Soldier	**Bodhran**
Flute	**Bagpipes**
Bible	**BB Badge**
Scripture Union Badge	**Rangers Top**
Pioneer Pin	**Ulster Unionist**

253

919

King William Mural

Sinn Fein

Celtic Top

Crucifix

Poppy

Union Flag

Irish Dancer

1916 Mural

DUP

UDA Mural

920

Alliance Party

Bowler Hat

Harp

Hurley Stick

Tricolour

921
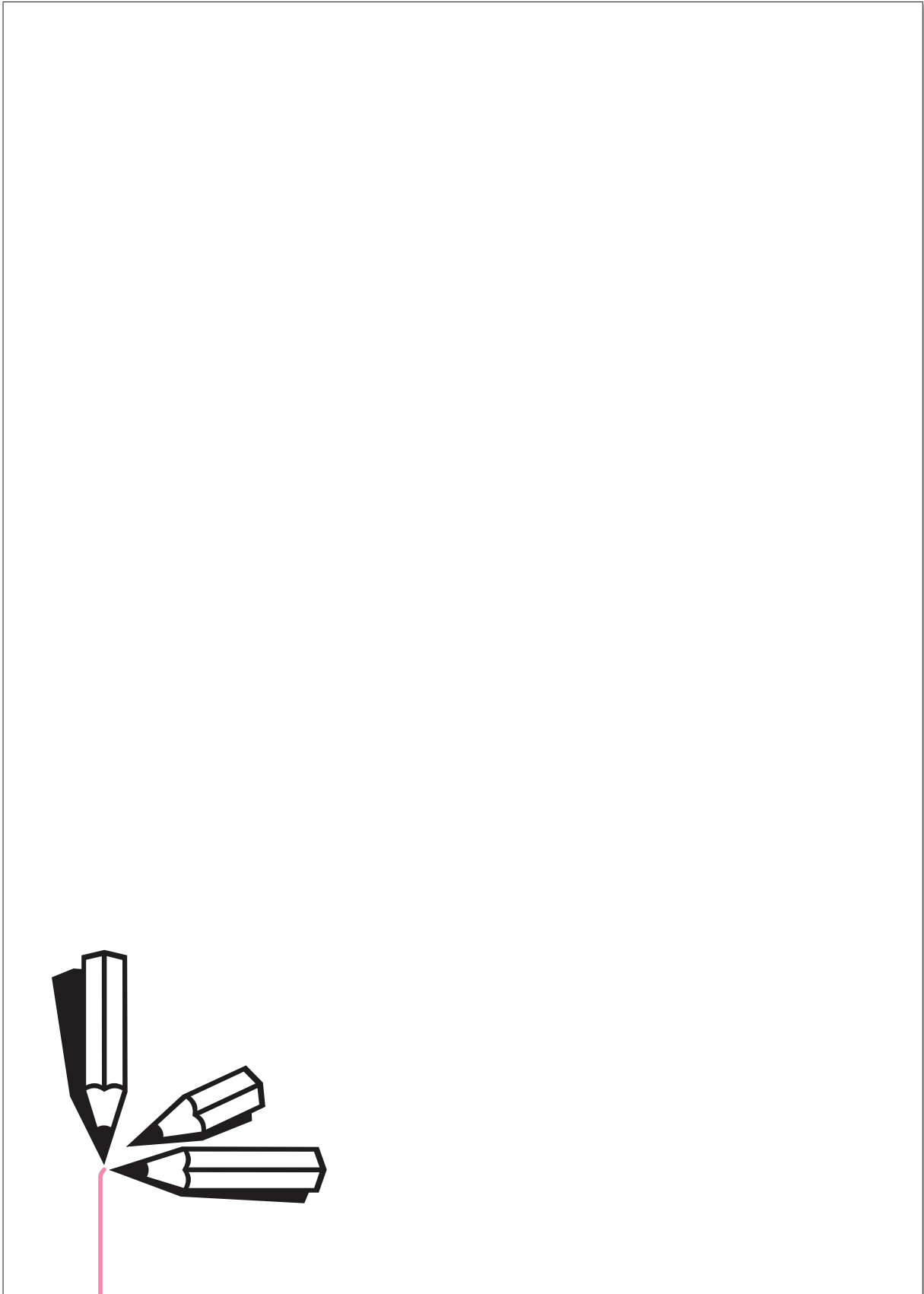
009753126

INTEGRATED EDUCATION
AND NEW BEGINNINGS IN
NORTHERN IRELAND

by
FRANK WRIGHT

WORKING PAPER: SIX
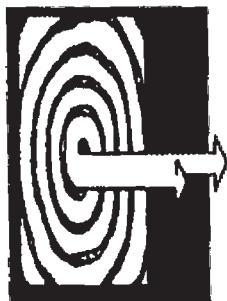
UNDERSTANDING CONFLICT ...
AND FINDING WAYS OUT OF IT

Integrated Education and new beginnings in Northern Ireland

INTRODUCTION

These papers are part of an occasional series produced by "Understanding Conflict...and finding ways out of it"

They are working papers based on our meetings with people in a wide variety of different areas of life in Northern Ireland.

These papers are a response to some of the themes which have been raised in the course of our work during 1990. We hope that they will inform and encourage people working throughout the community.

We would value any comments and views in response to the contents. These can be sent to Derick Wilson, "Understanding Conflict ...", Centre for the Study of Conflict, University of Ulster, Coleraine, BT52 1SA. Tel: (0265) 44141 Ext. 4550/4666.

Integrated Education and New Beginnings in Northern Ireland

Frank Wright

Integrated Education and new beginnings in Northern Ireland

INTRODUCTION

Many people in Northern Ireland want their children to be educated together with children of other traditions. There have been earlier occasions in the history of the North of Ireland when it has happened, at least in some places. Yet however much support there is for the idea of integrated education, putting it into practice seems to be exceedingly difficult. The gap between the amount of vague support there is for the idea and the actual extent of integrated education is usually wide. The purpose of this paper is to warn against over hasty plans to try to close this gap. The main reason why I am saying this is that I believe such an attempt will jeopardise what is most positive about the integrated education that exists at the moment.

While I was writing about 19th century Ulster, I learned about how educational conflict had had a very big part in the division between Nationalism and Unionism. Indeed it is hardly an exaggeration to say that at the core of each community [of Catholic and Protestant] there were fears of the threat to "Our" schools from the "Others". The National System of education in Ireland, founded in 1831, was nominally integrated. But there was a tendency for people to support integrated education most keenly when they thought their 'side' would gain from it. For example between about 1859-71 Presbyterian supporters of National Education - which they described as "Mixed secular and separate religious instruction"- were less than clear about how much control they already had over the mixed schools whose role they wished to expand. No debate about the benefits of an overall integrated education policy in the North of Ireland can ever be about the abstract advantages of mixing. There is a long history of suspicion about who controls education. For good reasons, people in the North of Ireland have been very cautious indeed about who they trust with the education of their children. The future of integrated education depends on how these anxieties are coped with.

Since the 1970s the idea of integrated education has had a new burst of life. What is really new about the integrated schools of today and different from previous ideas of mixed education is that they involve parents coming together and meeting and cooperating with each other. In Dorothy Wilson and Seamus Dunn's *"Integrated Schools- Information for parents"*, this aspect of the school is centrally emphasised. Difficulties involved in respecting each other's tradition, whether in the syllabus, the style of teaching, the use of

3

Understanding Conflict ... and finding ways out of it

symbols and so on... are resolved by parents and teachers together. In a school where parents have come together freely to create a shared environment for their children, knowing that there are risks and that there will be difficulties to work through together, it is very possible that new relationships will grow. But if instead children are pushed together most of the old problems which led to segregated education in the first place will resurface only slightly changed.

We can say that children are being pushed together whenever integrated education is seen as a way of changing other people rather than ourselves. This matter of emphasis is very important. There have been many occasions when people said what a good idea it would be to integrate all the schools so that children would grow up together without bigotry. But such dreams about how integrated education could change everything in Northern Ireland usually leave unanswered all the real difficulties.

To explain the point furthur, ask yourself who you have ever heard speaking casually in favour of integrated education. Do you know either of the following? Someone with a fantasy of Catholics and Protestants standing reverently before a Union Jack fluttering from the school flagpole; or someone with the fantasy of Protestant and Catholic children dutifully absorbing a history syllabus which puts Protestants "right about their Irishness". These kinds of supporter of integrated schools may say how they would like to see all children being educated together and brought up without bigotry, but their desire to put something across on the 'others' is a bad omen. Of course we all may have some fantasies of this kind, but there is little integrated education until parents themselves are prepared to face such possible conflicts of expectation.

The theme of this paper is that parent initiative in integrated schooling has real promise for the future, whereas if integrated education depends heavily on governmental promotion it will probably lead to big disappointment. If parents play some part in resolving the inevitable difficulties of integrated education, parental learning will go on and the school as a 'Meeting' of traditions will flourish. Whereas if integrated schools multiply as a result of favourable financial incentives, some schools may leapfrog the growing experience that the established integrated schools have been through. This will build concealed conflicts into their foundations. At worst people will end up rediscovering the advantages of separate education. So let us begin by trying to see what these advantages might be.

4

Integrated Education and new beginnings in Northern Ireland

ADVANTAGES OF SEPARATE EDUCATION. THE MANAGEMENT OF DISTRUST.

Throughout Northern history many people have sensed both that segregating children in different schools allowed bigotry to grow and also that separate education was the only secure way to ensure that schools respected the values of the childrens' families. Many of us know this somehow and we cannot argue away either half of it, though we are always tempted to do so.

For example opponents of separate schools have sometimes claimed that they 'cause' sectarian distrust and division. It is obvious that anything which keeps people apart, who might otherwise have got to know each other, must be doing something to sustain an atmosphere of distrust. But the argument understandably exasperates supporters of separate schools. In a society where distrust is pervasive between adults, it can be difficult to secure trust between their children. Unless people who distrust each other have some shared trust in an authority above them both, the management of that distrust can be exceedingly difficult. Separate systems of education have often been a way of making distrust between national communities manageable.

One of the few things which northern nationalists have ever praised the Stormont Government for was its handling of Education. Essentially from around 1930 onwards the Stormont government accepted an arrangement in which both communities felt their education system was secure against the encroachments of the other side. In other situations where different communities exist side by side, as they do in Northern Ireland, control over education has also been a central question. Where the communities have been more unequally placed than they are in Northern Ireland, the less powerful communities have not controlled their own education systems. Then the education systems have tended to atomise and demoralize these dominated communities. This was true for Muslims in secular schools in French Algeria and it was also true for the separate black [but white controlled] schools in the US Southern States.

By contrast, taking a long historical view from the 1830s, the separate school system in the North of Ireland has allowed Catholic society to build itself up to a level where it has not feared comparison with the dominant Protestant society. The Catholic middle class has built itself up around its teachers,

5

Understanding Conflict ... and finding ways out of it

although at the same time the boundary between Protestant and Catholic has been frozen by the parallel school systems. So even if the dual school system is a factor contributing to the present day conflict, it has also meant that the two subsocieties [roughly Catholic and Protestant] have been in a relatively more equal position in Northern Ireland than they would have been without it. There is nothing at all unusual about this: separate education has almost universally been sought by nationalist movements in Europe to build their communities and make them more cohesive. No national group ever trusts another nation to control the education of its children, if it has any choice in the matter at all. Whenever anyone proposes integrated education in these situations, it is almost invariably suspected of being a ploy to uproot the culture of the less powerful community.

Sometimes accepting the need for separate education systems has prevented struggles which might otherwise have torn up the unity of a nation. The strength of this argument for separation of schools can be illustrated by the story of Scotland. In 1918 the state school system was placed on a firmly segregated basis. Segregated schools no doubt play a part in keeping alive Celtic v Rangers feeling today, but Scotland has by and large remained tranquil, even during the last twenty years when sectarianism might have fed back into it from Ulster. The Catholic church has been content with a state system that contains a Catholic system within it. It is very probable that one of the reasons why the Labour party in Scotland has been able to span the gap between Catholic and Protestant has been that the truce of 1918 suited the Catholic clergy and a large enough part of the non-Catholic Labour supporters. Had the anti-catholic movements of the 1930's been able to seriously affect the working of the Act, it is probable that they would have been able to precipitate a religious division amongst Labour voters, and introduce politics back into the sectarian division. The essential point is that existing educational arrangements are part of an unwritten treaty in Scotland, whose full implications would only become clear if an effort was made to undo it.

No one today could argue that enforcing integrated education upon Scotland would have made for a deeper peace than Scotland has actually had. There are groups in Scotland now who are aware of how far apart religious differences keep people, and they are trying to work upon their common heritage as Christians in Scotland. In the course of their work together they might do something about the football hooliganism of the Old Firm. But the

6

Integrated Education and new beginnings in Northern Ireland

important point is that no one in Scotland is arguing for a global plan for integrated education to combat dangers of sectarianism at the moment. It is easy to see that a political campaign to do this would start to politicise religion and create the very problem we are suggesting it would be advocated to prevent. Because we have had so much sectarian conflict here in Northern Ireland it is tempting to blame it upon one of the factors which may have fascilitated sectarian continuity. But the Scottish situation, which is in some respects very like Northern Ireland, helps us to underline the difference between people working together to promote integrated schools and a hypothetical policy decision to desegregate Scottish schools. If sectarianism in Scotland did become menacing that would be both the worst occasion to suggest imposing integrated education and the most urgent reason for those committed to it to start promoting it on a voluntary basis. It is the same for us in Northern Ireland.

THE INVOLVEMENT OF PARENTS AND TEACHERS IN INTEGRATED EDUCATION.

The central difference between the two ways in which integrated education might come to pass have to do with how much of the dynamic is coming from the people directly involved. The hope behind most visions of integrated education in Northern Ireland is that if children mix together early enough, they will get so used to being together that they will be relatively immunized against sectarianism in adult life. What does this mixing together mean? Upon whom will the responsiblity for creating and cherishing this unusual environment fall? When few adults have experienced it themselves how do we expect that teachers will be able to do it? There is a great danger of putting onto teachers the responsibility for achieving something by magic, something they probably cannot do for our children, if we are not in earnest about wanting to do for ourselves.

What actually happens in an integrated school will not depend on the syllabus, so much as on the human relationships within the school. Teachers are not superhuman and whether children from different national traditions can really meet as equals, sensing the acceptability of their feelings and their home experiences, depends upon how the teachers and other figures of authority in the school create the space for them. There is probably little

7

Understanding Conflict ... and finding ways out of it

chance of teachers developing these new ways unless the context they are working in is supportive. Here especially the input of parents may be decisive.

Any integration, if it is to avoid the pitfalls that made separate education attractive in the past and in so many other situations, must be a meeting on an equal basis where neither community has the upper hand over the other. What does this mean? Although there are many ways in which this problem could be formulated, we can see an example of it at the heart of the Anglo-Irish agreement. In the Agreement the British and Irish governements refer to two traditions in Ireland or two communities within Northern Ireland. The two traditions are defined as one wishing to have no change in the status of Northern Ireland and the other aspiring to a sovereign united Ireland. The two governments speak of diminishing the divisions in Northern Ireland and of recognizing and respecting the identities of the two communities in Northern Ireland. How do you diminish the divisions and at the same time recognize and respect the identities of the two communities or traditions, when they have such diametrically opposed opinions?

Much of this involves enabling children [and adults!] to experience differences as enriching aspects of the others that we just accept. But there are deep and antagonistic roots to the different traditions and although it will often be inappropriate to introduce children to the antagonistic aspects of their parents different cultures, the occasions and ways for doing so will be better chosen if the parents and the teachers have themselves experienced real meeting with each other. Let us consider what is involved for parents and teachers.

"TOLERANCE" AND ACCEPTANCE

In the beginning I distinguished abstract support for integrated education and the growing process involved in actually creating it. This is very like the difference between just claiming to be 'tolerant' and making real relationships of trust. Acceptence comes out of meeting where we both feel secure and able to trust. In such Meetings together we hear what it feels like to be the other and we accept each other with our differences; and we change in ways we probably cannot anticipate. We hear one another telling about each others' experiences and we are not distracted with clash of opinion. We can only have ideas about what this will mean for us politically.

8

Integrated Education and new beginnings in Northern Ireland

We have seen that in a divided society separate school systems can make distrust managable and allow for the growth of a polite distance between communities. This makes distrust less painful, but it also allows us to delude ourselves about how tolerant we are. Very often 'tolerance' in the North of Ireland, as indeed in any divided society, is a kind of weapon for point scoring. "We are tolerant, but there is no relationship between us and them, because of ..xyz....which they are responsible for."

Here are some examples of this kind of tolerance: those who say that they are tolerant of Protestants, and that most of the distrust in the North of Ireland is on the part of Protestants towards Catholics, but who support the murder of [mostly Protestant] members of the security forces as part of a campaign to secure the unification of Ireland. Likewise there are those who say that there is no need for integrated schools, because the only reason the state schools are not integrated is the Catholic Church. They see no contradiction between attacking Catholic schools for creating segregation and claiming that, of course, Protestant clergy must have places on the management of state schools. These kinds of 'tolerance' are abstract theory and have nothing to do with acceptance.

In all divided societies it can be very difficult to cope with what the 'others' actually feel and say themselves about their own identity. When there are language differences as there are in many divided societies, they at least provide some tangible sign of difference which can be [sometimes reluctantly] accepted as a mark of national difference. But there are some societies of which this is one where people are nationally divided from each other by religion rather than language. In the Yugoslav Republics of Croatia and Bosnia, the Serbs [Orthodox], the Croats [Catholics] and the Bosnian Muslims all speak the same language, Serbo-Croatian, and they are three nations distinguished from each other by religion. Like ourselves they also have had difficulty recognizing each others' integrity. In the inter war years in Yugoslavia the dominant Serbians used to infuriate the Croats by treating them as though they were just Catholic Serbs. During the war the Croatian fascists attempted to wipe out Serbians by forced conversion to Catholicism and extermination. Only the victory of the cross-community Communist partisans, [despite their other drawbacks], brought any sanity to Yugoslavia.

Some insist that Ulster Protestants are part of the Irish nation, because it is

9

Understanding Conflict ... and finding ways out of it

'only' their religion that distinguishes them from Irish Catholics. Others insist that Irish Catholics in Northern Ireland are British, because they speak English and live under British rule. These approaches are similar to those which afflicted Yugoslavia before 1945 and may be about to happen again. Like the Serbs, Croats and Bosnian Muslims in Yugoslavia, Unionists and Nationalists in the North of Ireland have a choice about whether to accept each others' identities or to deny them and thence provoke continued conflict. Just as the Protestants' Britishness can never be reduced to a matter of denominational rights of a religious minority in the Irish nation, nor can the need for the Irish Catholic school system ever be reduced to one of mere denominational rights of a religious minority in Northern Ireland.

Like the Yugoslav nations, Catholics and Protestants in Ulster have different experiences of where threat, violence and humiliation come from. I have seen this theme unfolded many times as people tell each other about themselves. When we look at violence in N.Ireland, people are often attacked for who they are, not for anything they have done themselves. This is not just something about the present troubles. It has been true for much of our history. If someone is attacked, the first thing we need to know...if we want to understand it ...is what religion were the attacker and the victim. We are very interested in the reasons for violence, even when we don't agree with it. Violence can spread from one incident in a chain reaction. For example a Protestant avenges an attack on his community by attacking a Catholic. Then another Catholic attacks another Protestant and so on. If people know that an attack upon some person is an attack upon a whole group of people, of whom that person is only a representative, it has a massive effect. This is quite unlike an isolated murder in a normal society. It isn't necessary for people to agree with violence. They only have to understand what is happening and to be frightened by it. Once a cycle is under way, some acts of violence are seen as self-defence, reprisal, preemptive strike or deterring action. "They were provoked" we say. "They had good reason for their anger" we think. An attack is on us; or it is something done by our side to them, in which case we understand it in some way. We may give reasons for it, which somehow take away fom our sense of outrage. Or we may be especially ashamed of it, because we feel somehow responsible for it. What distinguishes one sort of attack from another is how we relate to the perpetrators and the victims. This reality makes us different from each other.

10

Integrated Education and new beginnings in Northern Ireland

Ordinary criminalization of the kind that happens in normal societies is impossible in Northern Ireland because we are so interested in the reasons why people did things, and we are not therefore united by our feelings against what they did. The Law is not an anchor, but more like an axis of conflict. Some fear that the "Law" will not protect us from "them" and others feel the law in some way tolerates or helps "them" against us. In Northern Ireland, no one feels entirely secure. Any tranquility this society has known has been more like a truce than a peace. The story of the Apprentice Boys of Derry, the marching of the Orange Order [which was once explicitly about patrolling rebellious natives], and many other aspects of Unionism, such as the permanent establishment of the 'B' Specials until 1969, show how tranquility was preserved by deterrence. Peace was never taken for granted. Just as the West and the USSR spent 40 years keeping the 'peace' by using nuclear weapons to deter each other, so Unionists always felt the need to deter the Nationalist threat. Nationalists resented the things done to deter or control them. So even when they disagree with Republican violence, they are less than enthusiastic about the British state power opposing it. Our different identities as Nationalists and Unionists largely depend upon the direction from which we expect violence and humiliation to come towards us and those closest to us.

It is because our experiences of threat divide us that there is such a strong aversion to talking about anything to do with politics or religion in mixed company. In fact it is an almost elementary aspect of keeping good relationships with people of the 'other' community that we do this. So we nearly always share our own trauma - the experiences which make us what we are- with those who are also traumatized as we are. Any cross national discussion about such experiences might turn into showing how much 'we' suffered at 'your' sides hands; and an argument about whose violence is worse. Polite avoidance of these issues and feelings both ensures that we make every day life as manageable as possible and that we go on reinforcing the differences which are always there and threatening to erupt.

When we see things in this way it becomes clearer why it is rather unfair to blame the schools we have at the moment for promoting sectarianism. As a rule schools in divided societies probably only reinforce the lessons that every other situation already teaches, including homes. Distrust of the 'others' is hinted at and intuited in countless ways, even as in this case when it becomes

11

Understanding Conflict ... and finding ways out of it

politeness and fear of offending. Schools may for example reinforce the sense that politics, religion and history are subjects to be avoided in mixed company for fear of giving offence. We make a very great mistake to imagine that schools 'teach bigotry', if by that we imagine that they have some specially malignant influence.

If our children are to have a better future, they must experience new ways of meeting with others. Then perhaps they will become free to deal with the big things that divided their parents, who were often restricted to polite avoidance of difficult subjects. If an integrated school is a meeting place where people find that their experiences are valid and that they are worth listening to, then it may give them this. The best integrated schools will be the ones where the parents have educated themselves together while creating and running the school. That can only strengthen the trusting environment of the meeting. In the rest of this text I shall suggest a few of the things this may mean in practice.

HISTORICAL REFLECTIONS

In the historical appendix, I shall develop some of the story of how 19th century efforts to promote integrated education came adrift. In 1831 the British government introduced the National Education system in Ireland. At very least for the first decade the system was integrated in spirit and it involved building trusting and cooperative relationships between clergy of all denominations. In the North this meant Presbyterian and Catholic particularly. But gradually Catholics pulled away from it, and a different kind of Presbyterian also came to support it. Eventually the defence of this system turned into a crusade against the Catholic clergy without whose cooperation it could not carry on in spirit as well as in name. This is one of the reasons why the early effort to create an integrated education in Ireland decayed.

The National Education system, introduced in Ireland in 1831, was intended to become a system of mixed secular and separate religious instruction. It came into existence after Catholic Ireland had been mobilized by Daniel O'Connell to secure Catholic Emancipation. The system was necessary because the existing, mainly Anglican, quality education was regarded as proselytizing. In the North the Catholics and a large minority of Presbyterians welcomed it and worked together to make it a sucess. They observed fairly

12

Integrated Education and new beginnings in Northern Ireland

rigorous conditions which included recognizing that each religious minister was responsible for the faith of the children of their flock.

But many Presbyterians did not accept the system until it was modified. In 1839 they were allowed to pursue their "missionary" effort towards Catholic children in 'their' National schools, subject only to a conscience clause permitting children to leave at times of religious instruction. This modification was the beginning of a process. First more and more Protestants, who regarded Ultramontane Popery as a menace, began to support the National System on the grounds that they were only required to make minimal concessions to "Popery". And once the Catholic clergy opposition to National education began to harden from the late 1840s, more Protestants began to support it because the Catholic hierarchy were against it. By the 1860s many saw it essentially as a rampart against Catholic clerical control of education. These kinds of "supporters" of National Education distracted lay Catholic attention away from the sincere Protestant advocates of school integration. In 1871 Orangemen with sashes took the platform at a meeting to defend the National Education system in Cookstown. The Ulster Examiner, a Catholic paper, said that these speakers with their sashes etc "exposed the real feelings" of the liberal clergy who spoke about the need to soften prejudices by mixing children in schools. This was probably nonsense, but it did show that for Catholics mixed schooling was increasingly likely to be judged by what its most anti-catholic advocates said about it. It had become very plain that many Protestants were now favouring mixed education precisely because they saw it as a way of breaking up the cohesion of the Catholic community. The liberal advocates of integrated education would have needed to do something to put a clear distance betweeen themselves and the No-Popery advocates. They would have needed to look for ways of developing trusting relationships with those Catholics, who like themselves, really valued mixed education as a way of softening prejudice.

It can be argued that because the Catholic hierarchy were completely against integrated education from around 1850 onwards, it was they who killed it. It is true that once the Catholic church had a lot of National schools under de facto Catholic management, it pressed for their denominationalisation. In fact the Catholic church sought denominational education throughout Europe at this time. But the claim that they were responsible for destroying integrated education is too simple. It fails to explore why virtually all Catholics in Ireland

13

Understanding Conflict ... and finding ways out of it

vent along with the Hierarchy on this issue. This did not happen in other parts of Europe. What happened in Ireland can only be understood when we see how the choices looked to Irish Catholics in the North. Where they had experience of working together with Presbyterians on a basis of equality in national schools run according to the original plan, they had something real to chose. But when they were invited to side with those who saw mixed education as a way of breaking the cohesion of the Irish nation, that was no choice at all. Even the most anti-clerical Catholic would chose the Hierarchy position without a moments hesitation when it became a power issue between the protectors of "our" schools and the traditional enemy.

The essential point is that in this society the meaning of any proposal for integrated education depends entirely upon the terms upon which the parties to the integration meet. Given the not unfounded Catholic suspicion of anti-irish and proselytizing intention of schools outside Catholic control, there is always a risk that schemes for integrated education might drift into de facto british-unionist-Protestant education. If it gets into deep enough rivalry with the Catholic hierarchy, its liberalism or anti-clericalism becomes a thin veneer for unionism.

This underlines the essential difference between a mixed school where it happens that there is large minority of one kind in the other kind's school and an integrated schoool where pupils of both communities come together on equal terms. When integrated schools grow as a compact between the parents, who know and trust each other from their work together, the kinds of dangers outlined above become less threatening. Political difficulties are manageable if the relationships between the parents are close. But for integrated education initiatives to happen on any scale, it will be much easier if people from the two communities sense that they are coming together from positions of relatively equal power. If it is relatively easy for people from one community to become involved and much more difficult for those of the other then mixed schools will tend to be only mixed rather than integrated. If the school systems of both communities are secure, and integrated education is not being promoted in opposition to them, then paradoxically integrated education is most likely to flower.

In thinking about the need to anchor the existing school systems, there would be an obvious role for a power sharing administration or [failing that] for the

14

Integrated Education and new beginnings in Northern Ireland

Anglo-Irish Conference. Something is needed to anchor both the state system and the Catholic maintained system, while at the same time making support available to voluntary groups setting up integrated schools on the same basis as other maintained schools. Each national community's school system must be cherished and seen to be cherished if integrated education is to be able to flourish on a voluntary basis beside them.

INTEGRATED SCHOOLS AND RECONCILING NATIONAL DIVISIONS.

Let us now come back to the question of what education has to do with resolving national conflicts? And what part might integrated education play in it specifically. It is essential to underline the fact that integrated education will only mature if it is allowed to grow without being burdened with unrealistic expectations. There are no magical ways of overcoming national divisions through educational systems. In fact quite commonly mixed educational systems in divided societies have been seen not as solutions to conflict but as part of the problem, a source of unacceptable power of one group over another. So what passes for peace in these societies depends on entrenching separate educational systems. This does not eradicate mistrusts, but it makes them more manageable because it leaves each group with their own space. When the problem of distrust is so real, as indeed we know it is here, it is quite unreal to think that the solution is to uproot separate education and impose an impartial syllabus in mixed schools. It is quite possible to stand in front of a class with wonderfully impartial words and to teach skin deep. The content of what is formally taught is much less important than the spirit in which it is taught. As parents or teachers, we often think that we teach with our words and yet when we reflect on our own experience as children we ourselves recall the feelings we sensed in our parents and teachers, rather than their words.

Again Yugoslavia may have given us a warning about what can and cannot be done with more or less impartial "syllabus" in an mixed or integrated educational setting. Since 1945 the Serbs, Croats and Muslims seem to have lived in something like harmony in Bosnia and Croatia. The ethos of the common curriculum was provided by the Communists unifying myth, which -unlike those in other parts of Eastern Europe- had a very large core of truth. It told how all the nations of Yugoslavia had taken part in the liberation

15

Understanding Conflict ... and finding ways out of it

ogether. The story of the Partisans was like an umbrella [or transcendence] over all the Yugoslav nations. In 1988 I heard this story told often and with conviction, but it was combined with slightly over-anxious denials that the differences between the Serbo-Croat speaking nations mattered anymore. For example at Jasenovac, the site of the concentration camp where the Croatian Ustashi had massacred Serbians in 1941-4, I saw school children being shown a film, which told how all the various Jugoslav nations had produced criminal elements in World War 2 who had collaborated with outside forces. Without much attention to how much support or how little support each type of collaborator had had, the harmonizing message was that all the nations of Yugoslavia could get on very well, so long as they kept clear of outside troublemakers.

But history, the history of why 'we' have cause to fear 'them', seems to have been only sleeping. Today it turns out that the divisions which so much energy went into suppressing and abolishing are again alive and well. In recent times the Serbians have pushed for dominance within the communist party; and the other nations, most notably the Croats, have become increasingly anti-communist. Since the decay of Communism in 1990, fairly intolerant nationalists won an absolute majority in the Croatian parliament. Their leader explained that they wanted to reduce the influence of the "fifth column", the Serbian minority in Croatia. They proposed to ban the Cyrillic alphabet used by Serbs. Serbs rose up to assert autonomy for Serbian districts in Croatia. They explained that they took weapons with them to guard the polling stations because "when the Croats last came in 1941, we were not ready for them".

Of course we cannot know what the unifying story of the liberation of 1945 did or did not do to bring some of the younger generations of Jugoslavs together. It must have provided a shelter under which some people came to terms with the things which had divided them. But what made the difference as to whether or not it did this must have to do with what went on in particular schools and villages and towns. It is clear that by itself integrated education has not had a great impact in mixed towns like Petrinja, where ethnic polarization even runs through the school staff room. The central point is that what changes us and allows us to grow is the trust which allows repressed feelings to be expressed in relationships with those who those feelings relate to. If power merely imposes a crudely 'impartial' story of how opposed peoples are not really so divided from eachother as they themselves sense,

16

Integrated Education and new beginnings in Northern Ireland

then a hidden agenda remains just buried. What is repressed does not change. It either lies dormant or it erupts. The communist integrated history, however well intentioned it had been, has not prepared a new generation to cope with the trauma of the past. Indeed the first outbreak of physical hostilities occured at the Serbo-Croatian equivalent of a Celtic-Rangers match in Zagreb.

The difference between history in Northern Ireland [or any divided society, such as Yugoslavia] and histories of normal societies is that normal societies' histories are not about relationships which are charged with any anxiety or tension today. People who live in normal societies do not realize what a good fortune they have being able to see things the way they can in fact see them. Learning about how to make seriously divided societies 'normal' is like trying to teach naivety. Normal societies histories are shared stories of how peace came. The devils cast out were the same devils for all the citizenry. And that is why the past has become the past. From that time they have lived in concord, disturbed sometimes by minor divisions, oblivious sometimes of their hypocritical unconcern with certain groups of victims, but nonetheless knowing with their being the difference between the past and the present.

For separate national communities in a divided society, for whom there is no common story of how or when peace came, the easiest way to teach about history and society is from the standpoint of 'our' community. In this history the 'other' community appears as an obstacle or threat. The separate school system can then make the best of a bad job, by institutionalising the avoidance of real meeting. Feelings linked with 'our' history can run most smoothly when 'they' are not actually present with 'us'. This does not mean that we cannot acknowledge the pain of the 'others'. But however we acknowledge it in theory, we do not have to actually feel it as a lived reality. If any of 'them' are present as a minority in 'our' school, it is possible to ignore 'their' feelings, so that the story still runs smoothly. If this happens the result is a kind of assimilation of the minority to the community dominant in the school. Alternatively feelings which are at the heart of the conflictual reality are avoided, while tangential bits of the story are concentrated upon and the story ends with "what a pity" it was that the two communities ended up in confrontation. We should not understate how difficult it can be to improve on this approach, if the ethos of the school is not one of trust.

17

Understanding Conflict ... and finding ways out of it

In an integrated school different feelings would be given space to to be heard. In all probability it will be in historical learning that this is experienced most directly. Integrated learning of history will not just be a matter of finding an impartial approach. An integrated history would be like a vessel in which our different feelings can find expression and interact. Each of our versions of history in a divided society are related to our ways of explaining our feelings and especially our fears in the experience of our families and friends and indeed in our own everyday life. If we explore our histories together with people who have experienced the opposite side of the fear relationships new aspects of history will become interesting and important to us. We can only find common history together when we first treat antagonistic national relationships seriously. Having recognized their coercive power over us, we are better able to see the 'others' historic failings as mirroring our own failings. Then we begin to look at history with new eyes. Perhaps we become aware of those who stood against tides not because they thought they would suceed, but as witnesses to transcendent values, which we will need to discover as a shelter to live under together. They may provide us with role models in place of heroes of ethnic conflicts.

CONCLUSIONS

The main reason why I wrote this paper is the situation that has arisen since the Government and Dr Brian Mawhinney made a very strong commitment to integrated schooling. Because there is an objective need to rationalise school provision, especially in some of the state secondary schools, severely affected by falling numbers, some of the state school providers are feeling threatened by government encouragement for what amounts to a rival system. At the same time the Catholic hierarchy has taken the British Government to court over its supposed intention to discriminate financially against Catholic and in favour of integrated schools.

Some people who support integrated education are understandably very encouraged by what is happening, seeing the old forces of divison being at last pushed aside by a dynamic reformer. They imagine that at last the sensible and moderate middle ground, Catholic and Protestant, will come forward and that something will be done to strike down bigotry at its supposed roots. I am sure that this vision is fundamentally misconcieved. I predict that

18

Integrated Education and new beginnings in Northern Ireland

sooner or later, if the confrontation with the Hierarchy is allowed to grow, then certain other developments will occur.

First the government will have to look for allies for its schemes and the terms upon which a state school can transfer to integrated status will be made progressively easier. [In terms of the historical appendix, that will produce a rerun of 1839] Many state school providers already consider their schools to be "integrated" -and at all events not Protestant- and will be able to secure official recognition for that claim with fewer and less serious conditions. Secondly the more deeply the government becomes locked into opposition with the Hierarchy, the more likely it is that certain kinds of Unionist politicians will come out in favour of "integrated education". [a rerun of 1871] Thirdly, as these two things happen, many Catholics who have up to now looked upon integrated education, in the abstract, as a good idea, will begin to ask themselves whether in the light of the support of English ministers and Unionist politicians on the one hand and the opposition of Catholic clergy on the other, they should think again. [a rerun of 1864-71] It might become another of those tragedies like the Hunger Strikes of 1980-81, when people were divided from each other, not by their rational intellect but by their gut feeling. Catholics might find themselves asking whether integrated schools set up in this climate could really be spaces where both traditions receive equal recognition. I hope very much that integrated education will be spared this trial, which could confound its real possibilities.

At the present time the most important principle to uphold is the parents right to chose a culturally appropriate education for their children [state, Catholic or integrated..or Irish or Free Presbyterian]. It is important, wherever possible, to look for a way of expressing these needs on a united basis, as a government keen to make education more efficient [ie cheaper] may find economizing much easier if educational interests are divided against each other. Integrated education might be destroyed by excessive governmental 'incentive' to promote it, such as financial advantage not enjoyed by other maintained schools whose main effect would be to change the labels on some of the existing grammar schools with sizeable Catholic minorities. It is of paramount importance that integrated schools do not appear as a tool of government policy in opposition to the existing schools. Probably the best thing that could be done to permit integrated education to grow would be to link its access to government funding to a firm commitment to the security of the other two

19

943

Understanding Conflict ... and finding ways out of it

systems. It is far more important that some integrated schools grow in the way that the ones which already exist have grown, going through the creative experiences involving the parents, than that many nominally integrated schools be created.

January 1991

20

Integrated Education and new beginnings in Northern Ireland

Historical Appendix to "Integrated Education and new beginnings in Northern Ireland"
by Frank Wright

EDUCATION AND NATIONAL DIVISION. THE 19TH CENTURY LEGACY.

At the beginning of the main text I showed how different national groups could make relationships between themselves more manageable by accepting that each needed their own education systems. Despite the ongoing conflict between Unionism and Nationalism in the North of Ireland, by the late 1870s, Home Rulers [later Nationalists] and Conservatives [later Unionists] were tacitly accepting this kind of arrangement. But before that time a lot of people continued to support "mixed secular and separate religious instruction". What happened to these people is instructive, when we look at the difficulties facing integrated education today.

{1} **Background.** Education controversies in their 'modern' form begun in Ulster around the 1820s. Before the 1780s, Catholics had been subject to the penal laws, which were intended to prevent the growth of a Catholic middle class and intelligentsia and to ensure that Catholics remained hewers of wood and drawers of water. Education of Catholics was conducted mostly in illegal 'hedge' schools. The imposition of the Penal laws slackened after the failure of Catholic Ireland to join the 1745 Jacobite rebellion. When 'hedge' schools became legal, the Catholics at the bottom of the socio-economic pyramid had nothing to match the endowed Protestant schools. But so long as quality education was still something for higher status social groups only, the Catholics in Ulster aspiring to it were very few.

Outside Ulster, only the ruling classes were Anglican Protestants and the mass of the people below them were Catholic. These Protestants tended to be very defensive about granting Catholics legal equality. But within Ulster, and particularly in the North-East, there were large areas where Catholics were a minority and there were almost no Catholics of power or consequence. In many of these areas the mass of the population was Presbyterian and had been opposed to the Anglican Landlords during the last years of the Irish parliament [1772- 1801]. Some had supported the United Irish Rebellion of 1798 for equal citizen rights. But the question of what to do about education was far more difficult than simply abolishing the anti-catholic legislation of the penal law era. Controversy over education developed as education became a need for wider social strata, and therefore for an ever greater number of Catholics.

In all divided societies, dominant groups tend to be less frightened of small groups of dominated people than of larger groups who can outnumber them. The risks of

21

Inderstanding Conflict ... and finding ways out of it

ılaxing the grip upon a dominated group are as small as the group is small. Small ıinorities of people, who were once dominated, can be treated just as a few ıdividuals with rights like the rest of 'us'. But larger groups cannot be treated like this. fter they have emerged from an experience of being dominated, they will demand ƆƆner or later that the qualities for which they have been stigmatised are shown full ıspect.

uring the United Irish period in Inner Ulster there was a big difference for Protestants ɔtween tolerating Catholics as individuals with rights and accepting that Catholicism ıas another denomination of the Christian faith, entitled to group rights and the same ıspect as their own denominations. Before 1820, schools in parts of Ulster were nixed", both in the sense that pupils were drawn from Catholic and non-Catholic ɔurces, and that frequently teachers would be found in charge of schools the majority whose pupils were of opposite denomination to the teacher. Although it was ɔmmonly Protestant teachers with a Catholic class, in some cases [for example in ə Glenavy, Crumlin and Tullyrusk district] there were schools with Protestant ıildren under Catholic teachers. Being tolerated and not distrusted, Catholics ·obably did not feel provoked because no one was trying very hard to convert them anything. That would change only when Catholics started to assert themselves as ıatholics throughout Ireland and encountered defensive Protestant reactions.

] Daniel O'Connell's movement for Catholic Emancipation in the 1820s ɔbilised Catholics as Catholics on a scale unprecedented. Protestant opponents of ıatholic Emancipation responded with a campaign to undermine Catholicism through ə educational system. The so-called "Second Reformation" intended to prevent a ıatholic middle class forming by ensuring that education led to Protestantization. This ısically revived the idea behind the Penal Laws.

ıe second reformation changed Catholic attitudes towards the endowed schools. ˙hatever assimilation of Catholics to urban commercial [and Protestant] values may ıve been going on before this, it had not previously seemed to be so actively ıended. It was up to Catholics who went to these schools to imbibe the atmosphere not; and even if these schools were actually far more influential than this, ınetheless they were outwardly tolerant and confident. But now some of those with ›wer over endowed education begun to look upon the assimilation of the educated ıatholics as a positive duty. Assimilation and conversion now became a conscious ısign, intended to detach educated Catholics from the mass of Catholic society. ıth the rise of an embryonic Catholic middle class whose power became visible in ə Emancipation campaign, the Protestant response spurred Catholics to build an lucation system of their own to rebut the avowedly anti-Catholic impact of the ›cond Reformation.

22

Integrated Education and new beginnings in Northern Ireland

[3] **Conflicts over educational systems were the beginning of many or perhaps most modern European national conflicts.** There came a point in time when dominated groups were in a position to organise behind their own middle class. While the dominant group tried to obstruct the rising group's efforts to control the education of its own children, the old mark of stigma became the badge of pride of the rising nation. If the Penal Laws had been focused against the Irish language rather than Catholicism then perhaps the different school systems in the 19th century would have been distinguished by language. This was what happened between the Germans and the Poles in eastern Germany or the Germans and the Czechs in Austrian Bohemia. But the Irish language had declined because the spread of commerce brought English in its wake. So instead of giving up Irish at the dictation of Britain, the Irish people had the freedom to abandon the use of Irish in their own way and at their own time. If the British had used much deliberate effort to try to eradicate the Irish language (as they did to Catholicism) there would almost certainly have been a reaction from the Irish which would have restored it to the status of first language. **Defending Catholic education has been seen as a sacred duty for Irish nationalists, even for ones who are not believers, because attacking Catholic education had always been seen as a way to uproot Irishness.** Theological issues have become important because Catholicism and Protestantism have become the distinguishing features of opposed national groups. Catholic institutions are assets of the Irish nationalist community and Protestant institutions are assets of the Ulster unionist community.

[4] **The National System of Education In Ireland.** A false start at integrated education? The first effort to create something like a system of integrated education begun in the aftermath of O'Connell's Catholic Emancipation victory. From now on no English government would willingly attempt to govern against Catholic Ireland if there was an alternative. The new Liberal government accepted the impossibility of Catholics relying on the existing Protestant educational agencies like the Kildare Place Society and the necessity of providing an educational system that would meet Catholic anxieties about proselytising.

In the National Education system [1831] they hoped to create an educational system which would service all denominations in Ireland, a proto-type of some subsequent ideas of integrated education in the North of Ireland. Central funding was the principal attraction and the rules were designed to promote interdenominational co-operation at local level. The National Board provided for two-thirds of the building costs and [after 1834] the running costs of schools that would be under local management. To begin with attempts were made to encourage applications jointly sanctioned by members of different denominations in a locality in preference to those which emanated from one denomination only. All Clergy had ex-officio visitor status (with rights of entry during school hours). And at specified times of religious instruction, all children would be withdrawn to the charge of their respective clergy. Existing schools could come under

23

Understanding Conflict ... and finding ways out of it

he scheme and receive running costs if they accepted these rules. In taking these steps the government was beginning to recognise not merely the formal equality of Catholics as citizens, but the legitimate role of the priest as leader of the catholic people.

The difficulties for Presbyterian relations with the Board arose from the ex-officio status accorded to Roman Catholic priests (especially at hitherto Presbyterian schools joining the Board system), the "restriction" on the use of the Bible in school hours, and the duty to send Catholic children to their priests at the times of religious instruction. These moves accorded a status to Catholicism equivalent to that of a participating Protestant denomination, a very big step from the abstract rights of individuals to the rights of groups. Any Presbyterian minister who cooperated with priests in educational matters was doing far more than merely accepting a technical equality of rights for Catholics. Wolfe Tone had optimistically fudged this issue, saying that when the Catholics were emancipated, the bond of oppression which bound the papist to his priest and the priest to the pope would be undone. In much of County Antrim and North Down, where the mass Presbyterian populations had supported the United Irishmen, how did they feel about according such status to the Catholic priest?

As Catholics organised as a bloc to secure the removal of the last of the Penal laws, the touchstone of success or failure would be whether their religion was accepted as having status (at least) comparable to other religions. There has been a tendency with some writers not to see how natural it was that when Catholics became more powerful, the earlier relatively effortless Protestant tolerance of individual Catholics would give way to reaction over these kinds of questions. Thus the rise of Dr. Henry Cooke to leadership of the Synod of Ulster has been seen as a sort of personal and accidental triumph of anti-Catholic intolerance over the Presbyterian Liberalism of Dr. Henry Montgomery. But Cooke was not objecting to formal equality of Catholics as equal citizens under the law. His demands for an "open Bible" was in effect a demand for no let or hindrance, beyond that which was compatible with a minimal recognition of the rights of private judgement, to evangelise all children in schools including all Catholic children who didn't actually object to being so evangelised. Any Presbyterian opponent of Cooke's position who supported the early concept of National Education and did not try to skirt round the recognition of the priests' guardian role were accused of compromising articles of faith.

5] **Priests become political as well as spiritual authorities in the North.** This happened often in the mixed nationality belts of the Middle East and Eastern Europe. Ethnarchy or clerical leadership in the North of Ireland gave the Catholic community bargaining power in dealing with local powers. The Liberal government reforms in the 1830s which were a response to the rising power of Catholics in the rest of Ireland, gave Catholic clergy in the North some leadership functions in relation to Education

24

Integrated Education and new beginnings in Northern Ireland

and Law and Order. Any power the Northern Catholics had depended in the first place on being part of Catholic Ireland as a whole. Once priests had such influence, they were often accorded recognition by for example landlords, which tended to build their position up yet further. Many secured sites for National schools from landlords who might not have facilitated the establishment of National Schools as a matter of right, but who stood to gain by good relationships with the leaders of their Catholic tenants.

[6] Where there is a gulf between ethnic groups, an area of anxiety, distrust, or thinly buried history of hostility, they tend to keep their distance from each other. Then "we" do not know very much about "them" and "we" tend to judge "them" by the worst things any of "them" do which the rest of "them" do not seem to repudiate. The worst things "they" do validate "our" suspicions of them. But what can become a blind spot for us is the extent to which "they" judge us by "our" worst. Dr Henry Cooke for example had a very understandable distaste for an educational system which he thought prevented schools from evangelising Catholic children. In 1833-4 two Presbyterian ministers in the Ahoghill/ Portglenone districts toured the countryside with mobs vandalising schools that had been placed under the National Board. The letter "P" for Popery was scrawled on their doors. Cooke spoke of their 'excessive zeal' against Popery, indicating how far the duty to the 'open Bible' could be stretched and how it might be legitimately interpreted by anyone on the relieving end of such mob action.

[7] To create something like integrated education, minister and priest as guardians of their flocks, had to work together in trust. It seems very clear that in the early days of National education, when it could only work on that basis of mutual respect and trust, that there were lots of places where integrated education actually happened. In 1849 at least twenty-five of the sixty-one vested schools in County Antrim (where the Board's regulations as to religious instruction applied) were under Presbyterian management. There was even one in Ahoghill, the centre of the 1833-4 agitation.

But the implication of mixed education subtly changed over the next 15 years. Towards the end of the 1830s, when the Catholic hierarchy became more dissatisfied about the system, the government became more and more anxious to conciliate Presbyterian opposition. The compromise of 1840 allowed non-vested schools to merely give children of different denominations the right to leave the schoolroom during hours of religious instruction. No longer was it necessary to accept the guardian role of the priest in relation to Catholic children. Then the Presbyterian followers of Cooke begun to declare the system acceptable. But this new support came from people who were not interested in working with Catholic clergy as the first wave had been. The spirit of anything like integrated education was already being undermined. This showed particularly clearly when an effort was made to extend the National

25

Understanding Conflict ... and finding ways out of it

school idea at university level. Lord Clarendon, the lord lieutenant, circulated the proposed statutes to the Hierarchy for their comments and criticisms, assuring them that Catholic clergy would have visitors status and that "in the council, professorships and other posts of such Colleges, the Catholic religion will be fully and appropriately represented". One statute provided that a student's failure to attend the place of worship prescribed by his parent or guardian would be sanctioned by the threat of expulsion. The official Presbyterian paper the Banner of Ulster described this as a provision that a Roman Catholic youth "may be expelled ... for attending a Protestant place of worship". The Banner's response indicated that an institution run according to its principles should keenly encourage Catholics to turn to Protestantism. "If the Government are determined to play into the hands of the Papists in this manner, we say, perish the Queen's Colleges. Let them be shunned by all true Protestants, let them be handed over at once to Dr. Murray and to the Pope". Fortunately for the Banner and for Presbyterian educational interests generally, they did not have to live with this anathema. The Colleges were condemned by the Hierarchy and two years later the Banner suggested that Presbyterians should now "take possession" of the Queen's colleges "so as to obtain a practical establishment within their walls". This, at least as far as the Belfast college was concerned, was what actually happened. And in later years when many Presbyterians were defending the principle of 'united secular and separate religious education', this slogan was often a smokescreen for a practical establishment" of Presbyterians.

3] The Catholic church had been glad of National Education when it was first created because it was the only way to secure Catholics education outside formally Protestant institutions. This changed as more de-facto Catholic but nominally National schools were built and once they saw the compromises the Presbyterians extracted.

The Catholic church in mid-century moved towards a denominationalist position as it did every where in Europe. The bishops' demands were highly disagreeable to anyone who wanted to preserve mixed education as a form of integrated education. In 1859 the Hierarchy issued a Pastoral Letter stating the necessity of separation in the educational sphere and they made explicit demands that the Government finance a wholly denominational Catholic system. Included in the demands were the chartering and endowment of the Catholic University in Dublin, the dividing up of the National Schools between the various denominations, and the total and unrestricted oversight of all such Catholic educational institutions by the clergy.

There were then a lot of Catholics still going to Protestant managed National schools and some going to higher level endowed schools. There were others attending the Model schools for teacher training and some at the Queen's Colleges. But the fact that

26

Integrated Education and new beginnings in Northern Ireland

within twenty years Catholics almost unanimously had followed the spirit of the 1859 Pastoral cannot be explained without looking at the actions of the movement to preserve mixed education.

[9] The Defence of Mixed Education up to 1871.

This section underlines our earlier theme that any attempt to preserve the National Education system as a genuine cooperative venture could only work so long as there was no question of it being a proselytising agency. Clergy had to accept that a Catholic was a Catholic by birth, and likewise a Presbyterian was a Presbyterian by birth. But this could only happen when there was local trust between the clergy and the educational providers. As the Catholics promoted more and more Catholic national schools, the integrated idea was under threat. But to respond to this danger by any other means than to concentrate upon preserving relations of trust locally, was to make matters worse.

Some Protestants started to see the Hierarchy as the obstacle to mixed education, and as actual relationships between Protestants and Catholics grew more distant, they made more and more noise about mythical "intelligent Catholics", meaning ones who were prepared to ignore the Hierarchy's pronouncements. Just how counter-productive this approach could be for promoting cooperative relationships with Catholic liberals can be gauged from the story of the Catholic Institute in Belfast.

In the 1860s, the Catholic middle-class in Belfast was still fairly small and in a great measure its existence depended upon service of its own community. Just as today when such a large part of the Catholic middle class is involved in the Catholic teaching sector. The wealthier Catholics, far from being rejected, were treated as an asset by the Catholic Community. The interdependence between Catholics was very strong and perhaps best expressed in Bernard Hughes' remark about Catholic opposition to the Indemnity Bill of 1864. The only Catholics, he said, in favour of it were "those out of the church, such as Freemasons and those holding government appointments".

In 1865 Bishop Dorrian was involved in a dispute with the lay trustees of the Catholic Institute over which he sought to impose direct control, including the supervision of the books and newspapers provided within it. The lay trustees refused to give ground. After several months of quite bitter argument the Bishop threatened to withhold the sacraments from those who would not bow to his demands. In the end the trustees signed over the deeds to him. Whether or not they would have done so under other circumstances is an open question. But the dispute drew the attention of other parties whose interest in the welfare of Catholicism was to say the least questionable. For example the 'Carrickfergus Freeman' had had this to say of the dispute:

27

Understanding Conflict ... and finding ways out of it

"The firm stand taken by the laity against the tyranny and usurpation of their Bishop prove that we were mistaken . . . and that the Roman Catholics are not such serfs or poltroons lying under the feet of their clergy as we supposed"

A.J. McKenna editor of the 'Observer' was profoundly embarrassed by the support coming from quarters such as this. He was opposed to the Bishop's actions, but seeing what "allies" the laity were collecting, he could hardly afford to say so. In fact, during the period rumours were widely circulated that he was writing anonymously against the Bishop in the 'Newsletter', a charge that hurt deeply and which he was only given the chance to refute when the rival 'Ulster Examiner' printed the innuendo three years later. The 'Newsletter's' intervention drew these words from him;

'We hardly need say that Catholics can settle their own affairs, without any interference on the part of their enemies. They require no instruction from the ignorant, no assistance from the hypocritical.... That subject will be settled by Catholics themselves, who are not accustomed to make scandals, or to perpetuate them, and whose unbroken unity is the best guarantee of their continued concord.....The only effect which the comments of our Orange contemporary could have on the Catholics of Belfast would be to make them adopt exactly the opposite course of that which it had the presumption to recommend. . . . The feeling of apprehension entertained by the Trojans of the gift of the Greeks, was no more natural then is Catholic alarm at Tory approval and Orange advocacy".

The message to Protestant Liberals about how to keep alive cooperation with Catholic Liberals ought to have been clear enough. It was utterly fatal to mix up non-sectarian causes with opportunities for pot-shots at the Hierarchy. You could not expect to build trusting relations with Catholics on a basis of hostility to their church leaders. In other words all windows of trust had to be looked into however dim the promise might be. But as the Catholic Church became increasingly adamant in its support for denominationalization, Rev John MacNaughton pioneered a new tendency to make the Presbyterian Church a political force for defence of the status quo in the National System, the Queen's College and the Model Schools (for teacher training).

Very few Catholics availed themselves of the opportunity to go to Queen's College, Belfast, which the Hierarchy had condemned. In 1865 only 22 of its 405 students were Catholic. When agitation began for a charter for the Catholic university in April 1865, the Presbyterian 'Banner' denounced it because, if it was granted, Roman Catholics would withdraw from the Queen's Colleges. Initially there seemed little chance of the charter being granted, but then the Presbyterian General Assembly voted to approve an application from its own Magee College in Derry to apply for affiliate status to the Queen's University. The proponents of the Roman Catholic university shelved their demand for a charter and seemed to be negotiating instead for affiliate status on the same basis that Magee was asking for. Here was an opportunity for a compromise to

28

Integrated Education and new beginnings in Northern Ireland

resolve the very difficult issue of denominational safeguards at university level, or was it?

How did the Presbyterians regard the prospect of affiliation not merely of Magee College but of the Roman Catholic university also to Queen's? A special meeting of the General Assembly was held in February 1866 to discuss the issue. This meeting, which withdrew the Magee application for fear of it being a precedent for the Catholic application, was greeted by both the 'Northern Whig' and the 'Banner of Ulster' as a "Liberal victory". MacNaughton opened the debate by arguing that the Presbyterian church was committed to the system of united secular education as a matter of principle; that the denominationalization of the National Education system through the introduction of the principle of sectarian representation on the Board was dangerous; that the Magee College application would be employed as a "wedge" to secure changes in the Queen's University Senate constitution which (in the process of affiliating Magee and the Roman Catholic university) would permit the denominational principle to creep in here too.

Much was said of the need to defend the rights of the Catholic laity to education that was not dominated by clerics. If Roman Catholic colleges were affiliated this, it was said, would reduce the incentive to go to the Queen's Colleges "and mix with their brethren of other denominations". At the moment Catholics went to these colleges "in the face of priestly denunciations". The Roman Catholic university was "an institution which was to regulate the Roman Catholic youth of the country in such a manner that it would not be possible for the superstitions which they advocate to be touched by the enlightenment of the present age". Put simply, defending "non-sectarianism" meant keeping "Popery" out of higher education.

Today we might well remember the small minority in the Presbyterian Assembly who, while they supported non-sectarian education, had some grasp of how the issue looked to Catholics. They understood the dangers of alliance with anti-Catholics. And they grasped quite clearly that the prospect of Catholic university affiliation to Queen's, rather than the granting of a separate charter, might be a viable solution to a very real difficulty. Most of the time there did not seem to be much chance of compromise in dealing with Ultramontane educational demands, but here were the promoters of the Catholic University doing something unusual and something which promised a possible route to a compromise. Admittedly Rev Richard Smyth, as a professor in Magee College, had a vested interest, but his speech sums up the knots that the advocates of "united non-sectarian education" had tied themselves in.

" I warn you that if you follow the view put forward by these ardent defenders of the status quo, it will land you in embarrassment and perhaps disgrace. No one has yet attempted to show what is wrong with the Government proposal. The students who

29

Understanding Conflict ... and finding ways out of it

---

vill be admissible for degrees under the new charter can get them now in London Jniversity (by external examination) at additional expense. And what I want to know s whether what is right in London can be wrong in Dublin? What right have you to)anish our students to London for degrees? Will you tell young Irishmen of education hat if they wish to be admitted to the right of literary citizenship they much go to England and there they will find a door open which is shut against them here? .... Liberty of conscience', say these its latest expounders, does not include an Irish Jniversity degree. They can afford to be generous, comprehensive and liberal in England, but Ireland would not be Ireland if it did not retain some remnant of ntolerance. But I now push the battle into the enemy's camp, and I tell our opponents hat they are the worst friends of United Education, for when a great crisis does arise, is some day it shall when United Education will be in real danger, these noisy brethren vill regarded as consistently discontented, hard to please, and their influence will be)st. Concede what is right without reference to wedges and resist where you should ffer resistance."

Although it is almost certain that the Catholic proposal to follow the Magee precedent vas only tactical, there is no way of knowing what might have followed if they had been uccessful in pursuing this tactic. An open hand from Presbyterianism then might have hanged the way Catholics pursued educational questions. Someone had to change nd here was a possible starting point. Instead Protestants carried on the farce of lefending the rights of the Catholic laity" against clerical despotism. At a Queen's :ollege Convocation meeting, the Vice Chancellor was hissed and groaned when he rentioned the charter. The debate that followed was of such a character that 45 :oman Catholic graduates walked out. And the Presidents of the Colleges refused to ɔ-operate with the Senate in giving it effect until its legality was tested.

he tendency for the defence of Mixed education to slip over into Hierarchy bashing rew stronger and stronger, as the cause attracted the support of more and more anti-atholics. In early 1867 a meeting in Belfast of "Friends of United Education" was alled to oppose the use of convents as alternatives to the Model schools as teacher aining establishments. Rev. J.S. Porter, a Unitarian and one of 19th century Belfast's ost active promoters of what we would today call integrated education, said that achers would emerge "with strong prejudices having never seen a Protestant child · teacher". The Catholic paper the 'Observer' said "There were Whigs, who would ɔ insulted or pretend to be insulted, if you called them bigots, who stood on a common atform with men who glory in their bigotry, and who espouse the 'mixed system' of lucation simply because they believe it inimical to Catholic interests". The 'Observer' und the meeting discreditable to Belfast Protestants and offensive to Irish Catholics.

late 1871, there were rumours that the Powis commission proposals in favour of nominationalisation were to be acted upon. Even the [Anglican] Church Education

30

Integrated Education and new beginnings in Northern Ireland

society moved toward the National Education League. So great was the seeming conversion of hitherto denominational Protestants to "non-sectarianism" that some Liberals became alarmed at the prospect of national education becoming the "pet" of Irish Toryism. Alex Johns, J.P. a moderate Conservative from Carrickfergus warned against letting the issue become a "Protestant question" and permitting its meetings to be infected with talk of "Romish errors". Yet William Johnston, the Independent Orange MP for Belfast spoke at a meeting of the League in Cookstown. He and other local dignitaries appeared wearing Orange sashes. The meeting, said the Ulster Examiner, threw off the non-sectarian disguise of the League. "The Orange sashes and paraphernalia of the Cookstown education meeting will carry this question beyond the domain of non-sectarianism, exposing as it does the real feeling which animates the Presbyterian and Unitarian ministers on the subject". This was nonsense but it illustrates the way in which, once an issue develops a hint of a sectarian colour, it is in danger of being judged by the most sectarian statement or action made on its behalf. Only actual relationships of Trust across sectarian division, and their preservation as the primary consideration, can be a foundation for work whose aim is to promote cross-sectarian understanding.

31

Cranmore Integrated Primary School

Principal: Mr W Doherty

Cranmore Integrated
Primary School
47 Finaghy Road North
Belfast BT10 0JB

Telephone 028 90664410
Fax 028 90665216
www.cranmoreips.co.uk

Evidence for Education Committee
Shared and Integrated Education

Introduction and Background

Cranmore Integrated Primary School was established in 1993 as an all-ability integrated primary school. The school initially opened with 37 pupils and 3 teaching staff in rented accommodation off the Lisburn Road, Belfast.

Demand, Growth and Expansion

In the last two decades the school has grown and developed beyond the imagination of the founding Principal staff, governors and parents. In September 2001 the school relocated to a new purpose built school on a site off Finaghy Road North. The school is a very popular choice both in the local community but also across south Belfast and beyond. The school has a current enrolment of 208 with a further 24 children attending the attached pre-school setting. Year on year we are oversubscribed for places in the school and pre-school.

Parental demand for integrated education has been growing steadily over the last two decades. In the transforming Northern Irish society many parents are opting to have their children educated together in an integrated context, in an effort to heal many of the sectarian divisions that have caused so much trauma in Northern Irish society. Indeed many of the pupils in our school come from areas where periodic inter community difficulties are a regular feature. However our parents have a great desire for their children to experience tolerance, respect and understanding of difference. They recognise that these aspirations are delivered by integrated schools like Cranmore. Indeed, many of our parents deliberately choose to drive past local schools and in many cases schools with excellent reputation so that their children can attend Cranmore.

Shared Education vs Integrated Education

Shared Education and Integrated Education cannot be seen as one and the same. They are two different models, with different aspirations and with varying degrees of success. Integrated Education has at its core the desire to see young people from Protestant, Catholic, other or no religious background educated together. Opportunities for achieving this are presented to the staff and pupils on a daily basis, sometimes in a formal way and at other times informally.

...a creative education for the modern Belfast child.

Cranmore Integrated Primary School Ltd Company Registration No: NI027338

Eco-Schools

In recent years it has become fashionable for other schools to market themselves as 'integrated'. In doing so these schools hope to attract additional pupils based on claims they are 'a naturally integrated school'. Integration is not about 'mixed' schools nor is it about children from different backgrounds sitting in the same classroom. Integrated education is about a much deeper commitment to providing our young people with a child-centred education in the context of a school where everyone is driven by the values of the promotion of equality and good community relations.

While there are good examples of collaboration between schools these projects are mostly ineffective as they focus on the issues at the time and provide nice encounter sessions between schools but they are rarely followed up when funding is no longer available. Any attempt to define shared education must not be an opportunity to propogate this model at the expense of integrated education.

Integrated education is a project for the long term stability of Northern Irish society. Attempts at shared education and providing funding for short term projects merely tinkers at the edge of the problems of sectarianism and division. Integrated schools have survived and prospered despite community tensions, a reluctance to challenge and change the status quo, issues with enrolment, accommodation and finance in the early days of existence.

Integrated education in many parts of Northern Ireland has shown that with tenacity we can overcome the barriers. However, integrated education is not as widespread an option as it should be nor could be due to those barriers.

Barriers and Enablers for Integrated Education

Barriers	Enablers
• Provision of integrated education in Belfast is very small and yet 66% of parents want to see the percentage of pupils attending integrated school rise from 4% to 33%. (Belfast Telegraph survey) • DE cap on enrolment numbers for integrated schools. (Cranmore IPS is currently capped at 203 and all classes are full) • Integrated primary schools have never been able to open with nursery provision. This is the reason why many of our schools have voluntary playgroups. The Minister has resisted several attempts by integrated schools to change from playgroup to nursery status – the argument of displacement. • The Shared Education agenda could impact on Integrated Education. Parents and the wider community may think that provision for sharing is the same as integration. • Development proposals are considered on the basis of impact on nearby schools. This ignores parental demand and also that the ethos, philosophy and general character of schools is different depending on the sector.	• Parental demand for integration is strong as indicated by many surveys and opinion polls. • Demographic change has led many to see the importance of educating children together. • The number of newcomer families in Belfast has created a greater desire to see children educated together. • Changing mind-sets – parents no longer send their children to the school they attended. • Increasing number of parents have the experience of having attended an integrated school themselves. • Commitment between stakeholders to the school ethos. • Performance of many integrated schools during ETI inspections. • The model of Integrated Education is help in high esteem across the world. • Cranmore IPS like many other integrated schools has hosted delegations of students, teachers and philanthropists from around the world who are keen to find out more about our good practice.

Barriers	Enablers
• Area based planning focusses on consolidating and a rationalising of the existing segregated system of education. • DE failure to fulfil the statutory duty to facilitate the development of integrated education as set out in article 64 of the 1989 Education Reform Order. • Pre-school settings seen as non-sectoral and non-denomiational. This is not the case for the vast majority of these settings the children in attendance are predominantly from one religious background. • The decision to form a single Education and Library Board is a lost opportunity and a lost voice to promote integrated education. The new ELB will have no direct representation from the sector.	

■ Please note the Board of Governors of Cranmore IPS have submitted two development proposals to change our PEAG funded playgroup to nursery status. Despite being oversubscribed year on year and with an established building which would require little capital spend from DE the Minister has refused the proposals. The Minister has cited his reason as displacement of existing PEAG placement. We dispute this and see a change to nursery status as a way od enhancing early years education in our area.

■ Playgroup and Nursery provision is not a level playing field. A voluntary playgroup is funded differently, professional staff have no access to services provided by the local ELB such as psychology, Education Welfare and SEN support.

■ A further inequality exists in that the early years curriculum is the same for both settings but a voluntary playgroup is inspected both by ETI and annually by Social Services. The restrictions on staff ratio and vetting procedures required by Social Services is a bureaucratic nightmare for the leader of a voluntary playgroup.

Conclusion

It is firmly our belief that planned integrated education offers the following benefits:

■ Integrated education provides a united community wherein difference is celebrated, diversity and respect are at the core of the school ethos. Opportunities arise informally and formally on a daily basis to explore difference and celebrate our shared traditions and beliefs.

■ Good examples of community cohesion is delivered without the difficulty of reaching agreement across different schools. There is no impact on timetabling, no need for the added expense of a neutral venue and additional transport.

■ Financially integrated schools meet the needs of the whole school community without over duplication of resources.

■ Educating our children together allows pupils to experience good practice in relation to conflict resolution, peer negotiation, CRED, PDMU and citizenship on a daily basis with their own peer/friendship groups.

Yours faithfully

Mr William Doherty

Department for Employment and Learning

Department for
Employment
and Learning
www.delni.gov.uk

Adelaide House
39/49 Adelaide Street
Belfast
BT2 8FD
Tel: 028 9025 7791
Fax: 028 9025 7919
email: private.office@delni.gov.uk

Peter McCallion
Clerk to the Committee
Committee for Education
Parliament Buildings
Ballymiscaw
Stormont
Belfast
BT4 3XX

Our Ref: COR/390/14

Your Ref: PMcC/JW/1606

3 November 2014

Dear Peter,

Committee for Education – Shared and Integrated Education Inquiry

The Committee for Education wrote to the Department for Employment & Learning on 12th September 2014 requesting information on how the Department believes that the further and higher education sectors currently interact with shared education programmes and the integrated education sector.

Please find enclosed the Department's written submission in response to this inquiry.

Yours sincerely,

FIONA STANLEY
Departmental Assembly Liaison Officer

INVESTORS
IN PEOPLE

people:skills:jobs:

COMMITTEE FOR EDUCATION – SHARED AND INTEGRATED EDUCATION INQUIRY

Written Submission from the Department for Employment and Learning

The Department for Employment and Learning thanks the Committee for the opportunity to provide evidence to this inquiry. The provision of education to all learners regardless of their background is an unwritten tenet of the further and higher education (FE and HE) sectors in Northern Ireland, and the Department is entirely supportive of the delivery of professional and technical (vocational) education as part of the core school curriculum through the entitlement framework. We set out below some relevant features of the FE and HE sectors in relation to shared and integrated education, how they have engaged in this area in the past and what role they may usefully play in the future.

Further Education

An Integrated Sector

All six further education colleges offer fully integrated education and training. They are required under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 to promote good relations between persons of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group, and report to the Equality Commission on their progress.

The FE sector has played a significant role for over 30 years in providing education and training for members of all sections of the community in a society divided by social and political conflict. Divisions continue to be evident in politics, cultural expression, education, employment and many other aspects of daily life. However, by enabling students from different traditions and cultures to come together to work and learn with others from different backgrounds further education has made an important contribution to the development of a stable and more harmonious society, and has the potential to make further contributions.

The statistics relating to the section of the community from which further education learners are drawn is shown in table 1. This demonstrates clearly that the further education sector as a whole is integrated, with learners from all backgrounds

studying in FE. Colleges are also reflective of the geographical areas they serve, with their intakes closely reflecting the breakdown of the communities in their areas.

Table 1: Accredited Enrolments[1] at NI Further Education Institutions by Background - 2008/09 to 2012/13

Background[2]	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13
Catholic	52,919	60,728	55,902	55,726	56,206
Protestant[3]	46,625	51,988	46,744	46,643	50,566
Other Religion	583	1,266	486	548	621
No Religion	6,080	6,349	6,550	7,126	9,088
Not Stated/Not Known	36,279	43,019	45,743	43,033	40,325
Not Stated/Not Known (%)	25.5	26.3	29.4	28.1	25.7
Total	142,486	163,350	155,425	153,076	156,806

Source: Further Educational Statistical Record
Notes:
1. Enrolments are for courses leading to regulated qualifications.
2. Background is not a mandatory question and has a high non-response rate.
3. Protestant includes other Christian.

Working with Schools

Formal and informal links between schools and colleges have been a feature of the educational landscape for many decades. However, the more recent policy of school and college collaboration has its origins in the Costello Report – "Future Post-Primary Arrangements in Northern Ireland: Advice from the Post-Primary Review Working Group" (January 2004). Between 2004 and 2008 DEL and DE worked together to deliver the Vocational Enhancement Programme (VEP), with DEL being the lead department and budget holder. The VEP was developed to progress the recommendations contained in the Costello Report and in the Further Education Means Business strategy to enhance the profile of professional and technical education, and to promote the need for collaboration among schools and FE colleges in the interest of all pupils.

The VEP grew from fewer than 2,000 pupils in the 2004/05 academic year, to around 10,000 pupils in the 2007/08 academic year who were enrolled on over 12,733 professional and technical education courses. Of the 12,733 courses, around 72% were taken up by 14 to 16 year old school pupils, and around 28% were taken up by 16 to 18 year old school pupils. By 2007/08, 220 post-primary schools (including 32

special schools), nine training organisations and all six FE colleges were involved in the VEP.

The VEP ended in June 2008, being replaced by the Entitlement Framework, which was also intended to take forward the recommendations in the Costello Report. Since September 2008, funding has been channelled through DE to schools through the Entitlement Framework funding formula, with schools 'buying' provision from colleges. The Entitlement Framework aims to provide access for pupils to a broad and balanced curriculum to enable them to reach their full potential no matter which school they attend or where they live. Under the Entitlement Framework, one third of the curriculum made available to pupils must be general (academic) in nature, one third must be professional and technical (DE use the term applied) in nature, while the remaining third is at the discretion of the school. However, pupils can still choose to follow a 100% academic course of study, the 'entitlement' being that applied courses have to be made available to all pupils. The Entitlement Framework is enshrined in legislation, and is being implemented by DE on a phased basis.

Currently further education colleges work together with schools in the delivery of the Entitlement Framework. Colleges are in the main tasked with the provision of high quality applied (professional and technical) education. The school and college collaboration aspect of the Entitlement Framework has worked well since its introduction, and colleges have had school pupils from different backgrounds attending their campuses to avail of the high quality courses on offer, delivered in state of the art facilities and led by industry expert lecturers. For example, in 2012/13 around 11,500 pupils availed of applied opportunities delivered by further education colleges under the Entitlement Framework policy.

School and college collaboration is important for two main reasons. Firstly, because of the enriched and industrially relevant courses that are made available to pupils as part of their wider curriculum. Secondly, as indicated above, colleges are recognised as being genuinely cross-community integrated educational establishments and, in addition, when attending colleges as part of the Entitlement Framework classes are often a mixture of pupils from different schools and from different backgrounds. Therefore, colleges' involvement in the delivery of the Entitlement Framework can contribute substantially to the shared education policy intent.

It is also important to highlight that college and schools work together on the area planning of provision to be delivered under the Entitlement Framework.

While school/college collaboration has worked well, there is a considerable risk that changes to how the Entitlement Framework is funded, in particular the removal of the 'ring fenced' budget allocation, may reduce schools' willingness to collaborate with colleges. Evidence is emerging that the view of many schools is that they will not be able to afford to collaborate with colleges to the extent that they have in the past when the funding model is changed from the 2015/16 academic year. If schools collaborate less with colleges, there is a risk that the lecturing capacity that has been built up over a number of years will be lost.

All of this is bound to have an adverse impact on the delivery of the shared education agenda, as colleges are fully integrated environments where school children would be studying professional and technical qualifications in classes made up of people drawn from all sections of the community. Additionally, we believe that further education colleges are much better equipped than schools to deliver these qualifications due to their facilities and expertise, so any retrenchment from colleges to schools of the applied section of the Entitlement Framework is likely to jeopardise the shared education outcomes and, indeed, the qualifications outcomes and wider education experience of school children, from whichever part of the community they are drawn.

Shared and Integrated College Estates and Facilities

As indicated, further education colleges, as cross-community institutions that cross all educational boundaries and welcome all ages and backgrounds, are at the forefront of shared education. This continues to be manifested through the continuing development of the college estate. For example, Southern Regional College has an approved outline business case to build a new college in Craigavon which will open up integrated education for a wider section of the population of the area than is currently the case in the existing separate campuses in Portadown and Lurgan. Also relevant is the recent progress of the Lisanelly Education campus in

Omagh which would open up opportunities for South West College to further develop engagement with the post-primary education system.

Colleges also continue to work together to share resources and facilities between themselves through the implementation of a shared services programme. While shared education is not a direct aim of this approach (it is more concerned with realising potential organisational efficiencies and bringing colleges together as a more coherent sector), the lessons learned from these processes may well be of interest to the schools sector when planning their own collaborative arrangements to deliver the shared education agenda.

Higher Education

The majority of Higher Education provision in Northern Ireland operates largely on a shared and integrated basis. The sector is comprised of five institutions, Queen's University Belfast, University of Ulster, the Open University, Stranmillis University College and St Mary's University College. The institutions are committed to the promotion of equality of opportunity and to creating and sustaining an environment that values and celebrates the diversity of staff and students. The institutions are supported in their efforts by their respective Students' Unions.

Students enrolled at the institutions include all sections of the community as illustrated in the extract from the most recent HESA data below:

Religion [2] [3]	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13
Protestant	14,200	13,570	14,415	14,740	14,505	14,065
Catholic	19,820	19,380	20,995	21,380	21,275	21,115
Other	1,345	1,395	2,270	2,765	3,510	4,115
Not known	6,720	7,355	5,990	5,070	3,970	4,085
Non NI Domiciles	6,110	6,540	7,320	8,040	8,645	8,335
Total	48,200	48,240	50,990	52,000	51,905	51,715

Source: HESA

2 Information on religion, marital status and dependents is only collected for NI domiciled students studying at NI HE institutions.
3. Religious affiliation is not a mandatory question and therefore can have a high non-response rate.

Initial Teacher Education

Within the initial teacher education sector, i.e. the two universities and university colleges, accommodating faith based education provision within current structures leads towards religious imbalances in student enrolments at the teacher training colleges. This is also reflected in the table of NI domiciled enrolments at the university colleges below:

Religion	Stranmillis University College			St Mary's University College		
	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2010-11	2011-2012	2012-2013
Protestant	715	820	895	5	5	10
Catholic	355	400	445	930	975	1,045
Other	25	30	30	5	5	5
Not known/available	160	40	45	10	5	10
Total	1,250	1,290	1,415	950	990	1,070

Source HESA

Note: Figures have been rounded to the nearest 5 in line with HESA Policy.

The principle of shared and integrated education was a key issue in the recent Stage Two Review of Initial Teacher Education Infrastructure. The Minister recently commissioned this review to consider how best to develop teacher education to a world-class standard; to enhance and improve sharing and integration; to examine whether the funding provided could be used more effectively; and the structural changes that need to be made achieve that. The Review Panel invited submissions from across the teacher education sector and held meetings with key stakeholders including representatives of the integrated education sector.

The final report reflects the evidence provided to the Panel, demonstrating commitment throughout the teacher education sector to the principle of shared education, and also the commitments outlined in key public documents such as *Programme for Government*, *Together: Building a United Community; and the Department of Education Ministerial Advisory Group 'Advancing Shared Education'*.

The Panel commented:

"It is clear from evidence submitted to us, and from our discussions with the teacher education institutions, that all subscribe to the principle of shared education, that all make a contribution at present to what shared education entails, and that all are

willing to contribute to the further development of shared education. Moreover, shared education is a key policy objective supported by all political parties in Northern Ireland and therefore has important implications for initial teacher education.

As the recent report to the Minister of Education defined it, shared education involves two or more schools or other institutions from different sectors working in collaboration in a way that "delivers educational benefits to learners, promotes the efficient and effective use of resources, and promotes equality of opportunity, good relations, equality of identity, respect for diversity and community cohesion". Moreover, just as faith-based teacher education is accepted to require active participation in and personal experience of what it means to teach in a particular faith tradition, so we maintain that all teacher education students should, as part of their total programme and experience, engage in shared education activities of the kind we have mentioned."

The Review Panel also draws attention to the future sustainability of the current Initial Teacher Education system and acknowledges that although this can build on the existing high quality provision, there is a need *"to accelerate those developments in a way that will ensure financial sustainability. The report provides examples, such as encouraging providers to diversify their provision through perhaps greater collaboration and jointly offered undergraduate degrees between the Universities and the University Colleges, drawing on their different expertise."*

The Panel concludes:
"Underpinning all of these considerations is the need to make the best use of limited financial resources in training and developing a teaching force for Northern Ireland that is truly world-class. Given what we have learned about the commitment to achieving that objective that already exists in Northern Ireland, we believe there are good grounds for being hopeful."

This is consistent with the Stage One Study of Initial Teacher Education (2013), conducted by independent consultants, which analysed the financial stability of the two university colleges and demonstrated that the colleges are heavily reliant on maintaining intake numbers and grant levels per student in the future to remain

financially viable and concluded that both colleges are unlikely to be financially viable unless significant efficiency savings can be obtained or additional income earned.

The Review Panel has included in the '*Conditions for Change*' section of their report that it recommends for any new Initial Teacher Education infrastructure, that each institution should ensure that every teacher education course should include a programme of shared education. The Review Panel acknowledged that this was a matter for the Department of Education however it believed that,

"*initial teacher education has a vitally important role to play in the achievement of effective shared education and we hope that DE will agree to make the preparation of new teachers in shared education a significant and compulsory element for all programmes. Such an element is an integral feature of all four policy options outlined in the report.*"

Work is underway on engaging with the HE institutions about the detail of the report including the focus on shared education.

Conclusion

Taken together, the further and higher education sectors in Northern Ireland have a good track record in delivering education to all citizens, regardless of their background. In the light of the FE sector's remit for delivering the Entitlement Framework, the Department believes that there is the potential for the schools sector to learn from the experience of FE in delivering this approach successfully, whether it is through direct engagement with colleges or engagement at a departmental level. Engaging colleges as partners in delivering the Entitlement Framework will also assist greatly in achieving the aims of the shared education policy, as well as ensuring that the best professional and technical education is available to all school-age learners.

We wish the Committee well with its inquiry.

Drumlin Integrated Primary School

Drumlins IPS

43 Lisburn Road
Ballynahinch
Co Down
BT24 8TT
Tel: 028 9756 3755
Fax: 028 9756 3755

Principal: Mrs Janice Marshall

24th October 2014.

Dear Mr McCallion

I am writing in response to your request for written evidence with regard to Shared and Integrated Education.

I am principal of Drumlins Integrated Primary School, in Ballynahinch. Our school opened 10 years ago due to parental demand; parents in Ballynahinch wanted the choice of integrated education for their children in this town. Drumlins met all necessary criteria for the school to receive full Department of Education funding and approval. The school opened in September 2004 with 12 Primary 1 pupils and currently has over 170 pupils and is one of the most oversubscribed schools in the area.

This oversubscription has certainly not been achieved through the school having better resources and physical structure than other schools; indeed the school currently sits in an industrial estate, in a number of mobiles on our third temporary site. Our school has faced a number of very significant challenges since opening; outgrowing each site, having poor physical accommodation, facing uncertainty as to where – or even if – a permanent school site could be identified and having low admissions and enrolments set for the school causing difficulty for the school's growth. Despite these obstacles the school has remained a popular choice with parents and in most years has been oversubscribed.

We were delighted on 24th June 2014 when the Minister for Education, John O'Dowd, announced that Drumlins was to receive a new purpose built school to serve the children of the Ballynahinch area – but our success has not been dependant on this announcement.

In Ballynahinch sharing occurs successfully across sectors at both primary and post-primary level; we are fully in support of this and are often involved in sharing activities with the other schools. However the parents in the town still wanted to have the choice of integrated education for their children. A huge amount of work had to be undertaken over several years for the parents to achieve this goal and I personally have a huge amount of respect for the school steering group as I had the privilege of joining them at a later stage, when so much of the work had already been done. I do however have the shared goal with those early parents and our current parents of achieving academic excellence for our pupils through learning in an integrated setting.

Our pupils have opportunities to learn about and develop respect and understanding of one another's culture, religion, beliefs and abilities. I have no doubt that this happens in other educational settings which are not integrated but we value having 'Integrated' in our title as it clearly states our intention in both learning and ethos.

Sharing is a term which can be open to much misinterpretation; for example, how much sharing? In what ways are things shared? What is shared? How is the sharing regulated? Integrated schools clearly state what integration is and how it is regulated in the schools

by adopting NICIE's Statement of Principles and by adhering to the legal structures set out through the Scheme of Management and the adherence to the Department of Education's requirements for Integrated Schools.

Integrated schools allow children to learn, play, develop friendships and set in place the building blocks of respect and understanding for the adults of Northern Ireland for our future. There is no ambiguity or misunderstanding in this goal; it is one which clearly sets out the intention – to educate children together side by side in the same classrooms with clearly set out aims and objectives.

Our concern is that Shared Education would be seen as the same as, or equivalent to, Integrated Education when these two systems are entirely different, with totally different goals. There is no doubt that many schools and educational establishments would benefit from greater sharing – but this does not equate to integrated education, integrated education exists in Integrated Schools. We do not want to see the excellent work which exists in Integrated Schools being undermined by a separate system albeit one with good intentions and positive elements.

I would be happy to add to this submission or discuss this further if required.

Yours sincerely

Janice Marshall

Drumragh Integrated College - Student Council

Northern Ireland Assembly Committee for Education
Inquiry into Shared and Integrated Education

Submission from The Student Council of Drumragh Integrated College

24th October 2014

1.   Factual Information

1.1   Drumragh Integrate College has two Student Councils. The Junior Council is for KS3 and the Senior Council is for KS4 and KS5. The remit of both councils is to canvas the opinion of the student body on a range of issues and feed back to the Senior Leadership Team via regular Student Council meetings. The students can if they wish, ask members of staff to attend their meetings, and the council attend SLT meetings to present their opinions.

1.2   Each council consists of one representative from each form class.

1.3   Both councils met recently to consider their submission to the Inquiry into Shared and Integrated Education.

2.   The Student Voice

2.1   'I came to this school because it's the better type of school, because no matter what you believe or where you're from you can make friends with anyone… It is important to meet people from different backgrounds so you can learn about other people's point of view.'

2.2   '… my best friend is a different religion and I'm glad she is because I learn about her and she learns about me and we learn to accept each other.'

Rachael

2.3   'An integrated school is good because you have more of a community.'

2.4   'The friends I meet inside of school are now some of my best friends outside of school.'

Harry

2.5   'Stop worrying about the political side of this. Worry about the thousands of lives that depend on integrated education.'

Mark

2.6   'In today's society integrated education is fundamental to safe and settled students. The Belfast flag riots are in my opinion a direct result and a fantastic reminder of how people cannot get on… 20,000 people can make a dramatic difference… integrated education has never been more relevant in today's society. Take a look around you.'

Elliott

2.7   "Genuinely, I am all for Integrated Education. I find this school to be very calm in terms of everyone being together in the one building, mostly because it's widely understood by the students in this school that we are all individual people to be respected as you would anyone else. Every student is offered the same opportunities here and we are encouraged to do our best. There is no bias towards any certain ethnic or religious groups because we as students are all just children who come here to learn in a place we feel safe. It would be wrong to force a child into a situation where they feel insecure about their physical attributes or name, because they don't fit into a certain religious ethos. I really value Integrated Education

because in a sense it teaches children to unlearn any personal grievances against groups of people, which mostly makes the difference as they grow older and are able to develop their own tolerance and understanding. School is about learning, becoming a more educated person and academic growth. To me it seems wrong to stunt that growth with the segregation of people."

Kellie

2.8 "I think Integration is the only way we as a country can move forward, away from the "troubles". It truly is the only way to move forward and personally I think the government should be doing more to support Integrated Education"....."Integration teaches that everyone's viewpoint and opinion matters and that everyone should be treated equally no matter what."

Lauren

2.9 "A shared education is when different schools come together and be with each other for like two hours, then go different ways and forget about it. Integrated Education is when we are all together like two streams meeting into one"

Courtney

2.10 "The difference between Shared Education and Integrated Education is that in Shared Education you still have the different schools with different uniforms only sharing some things for a while, but Integrated Education has the one uniform and the one school and your together all the time."

Morgan

2.11 "Integrated stay united together for work, play and education. Integrated are stronger together. Shared means retreat back to your own separate schools."

Jamie

2.12 "Attending a school that promotes an integrated ethos will help to benefit society as it will encourage everyone to embrace and accept people of all parts and religions of the world. Not only will it benefit the society of today, it will also help the future generations to come...being educated in an integrated atmosphere is helping to break the old traditions, helping to benefit the future of Northern Ireland.."

2.13 "Integration promotes equality and diversity which I feel is important because all members of the community should be accepted. In my friendship group we have different religious backgrounds and that doesn't seem to be a problem because we are all human beings... Disagreeing with Integrated Education is promoting the conflict that has been inflicted upon people in earlier years...Integrated education provides a model of education fit for building a prosperous and peaceful 21st century."

Racel

2.14 "Please take our views into consideration as we are the students in the school."

Drumragh Integrated College

Northern Ireland Assembly Committee for Education
Inquiry into Shared and Integrated Education

Submission from Nigel Frith, Principal of Drumragh Integrated College

23rd October 2014

'We have flown the air like birds and swum the sea like fishes, but have yet to learn the simple act of walking the earth like brothers.'

- Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

1.   Introduction

1.1   Drumragh Integrated College is a grant-maintained, integrated, post-primary 11-19 college. It opened in 1995, having obtained the minimum number of pupils required for commencement. It was based in the Victorian Tyrone and Fermanagh Hospital building until 2009, when it moved into its present, much-appreciated new accommodation on the Crevenagh Road, Omagh. There are currently just over 660 students on roll.

1.2   The College's ethos is genuinely and pro-actively integrated, as evidenced for example by its effective approaches to Ash Wednesday, Remembrance and responding to conflict. Drumragh IC was one of the first schools in Northern Ireland to achieve the 'Excellence in Integrated Education Award', in 2010. Its mission statement is 'Excellence for Everyone'. We strive to offer a shining example of integration in practice and to provide a quality of education that is second to none.

1.3   I have had the privilege of being the principal of Drumragh Integrated College since September 2005.

2.   The nature and definition of Shared Education and Integrated Education, including consideration of the need for a formal statutory definition and an obligation in statute to facilitate and encourage Shared Education

2.1   A working definition of shared education, endorsed by the Ministerial Advisory Group in their March 2013 report, 'Advancing Shared Education', is this:

> *Shared education involves two or more schools or other educational institutions from different sectors working in collaboration with the aim of delivering educational benefits to learners, promoting the efficient and effective use of resources, and promoting equality of opportunity, good relations, equality of identity, respect for diversity and community cohesion.*

2.2   Integrated schools are based, amongst other things, on the 'Statement of Principles'. This Statement declares that:

> *The integrated school provides a learning environment where children and young people from Catholic and Protestant backgrounds, as well as those of other faiths and none, can learn with, from and about each other. The promotion of equality and good relations extends to everyone in the school and to their families regardless of their religious, cultural or social background. Integrated education is value-driven and child-centred. It is delivered through a holistic approach with an emphasis on developing every aspect of a child's or young person's potential.*

2.3   High quality shared education and integrated education both have the potential to transform society, based on contact theory; the more time children spend together side by side, in a mutually respectful safe space, the more transformation of values is possible. Wherever

shared or integrated education can achieve these goals, it should be led, encouraged and facilitated; because this is what NI needs for the future. But this should only apply to quality shared or integrated education, where conditions are pro-active, where much much more is happening than children from different communities or schools being introduced to each other; where in fact they are immersed in a learning experience that encourages the development of mutually respectful values on a day-by-day, moment-by-moment, practical and meaningful basis. This is about quality contact, in other words, not lip service nor superficial and ineffective approaches.

2.4   Quality shared education and quality integrated education should both be formally defined, with a statutory obligation to facilitate and encourage them – as is currently specified in Article 64 of the 1989 Order. The obligation should however be very clear and insistent in distinguishing between quality and ineffectiveness. Every school should be required to fulfil one and/or the other duty, and facilitated in doing so with excellence. All educationalists and politicians should be united in seeking not just academic success, but the effective shaping of young people's values so that they can lead Northern Ireland out of its dark past.

2.5   Integrated schools are not the only solution to society's ongoing problems but they are a key part of the solution. It is the responsibility of us all to work together to resolve these difficulties, for the sake of our children, society and the future of Northern Ireland.

3.   The design and aims of integrated education; 'the thing works'

3.1   Some people have a limited or flawed understanding of integration, thinking it is just a mixing of cultures and at worst encourages a 'watering-down' of one's own beliefs. In fact integration encourages young people to respect difference, to define themselves and to present themselves confidently. It is an all-ability, inclusive approach to education, thereby reducing barriers to learning and encouraging excellence.

3.2   The integrated sector has defined expectations and requirements regarding religious and cultural balance amongst the student body, the staff and even the governors. These are largely to create a sense of community wherein no-one feels isolated and where mutual respect can flourish.

3.3   Looking beyond the importance of balance and admissions, an essential difference between an integrated and a mixed learning environment is what happens after the student body has been enrolled. We do not simply admit students from different traditions and expect them to 'muddle along', nor to pretend that everyone is the same. Our approach counters sectarian, divisive messages and positively promotes mutual respect.

3.4   The ethos of an integrated school is deliberately planned. It involves tolerance, not simply toleration of someone from another tradition or culture. We are alert to the dangers of sectarian attitudes and actions. Difference is not 'swept under the carpet' but rather is recognised and embraced, with respect. This is all done strategically and staff are aware of how to both encourage and monitor its effectiveness.

3.5   Some examples based on approaches taken at Drumragh IC will perhaps prove helpful. First of all, the delivery of the curriculum is carefully handled. In Religious Education, students are given a balanced, respectful presentation of different religions and beliefs, encouraging them to accept difference and to explore what they believe themselves. In History, different views of historical events and perspectives are recognised, with an emphasis on thinking skills and analysis. Elsewhere, where the curriculum is perhaps less sensitive in a sense, teaching is still deliberately mindful of the views and backgrounds of those present.

3.6   Important events in the Drumragh Integrated College calendar also illustrate the distinctiveness of an integrated ethos. Remembrance involves a proactive education programme in the weeks running up to it, where staff help students to understand the college's view of this annual event. Remembrance is seen in the college as a time to remember and respect those who have died in war, but also to strive to learn the lessons of

history; that dialogue and understanding, not violence, are the keys to a peaceful society. This perspective is also presented in whole-college assemblies, and students are then invited to wear poppies or not, as they choose.

3.7   Another example of the integrated ethos in action at Drumragh IC is Ash Wednesday, a central event for the college every year. Here the whole college community is brought together for the Ash Wednesday service. Clergy from both Catholic and Protestant denominations are welcomed, to speak during the services and, in the case of the priest, to administer the ashes. The service opens with the principal stating that for all of us the service is an opportunity to consider how we are living our lives and, if we see the need, to resolve to make changes for the better. The terms 'Catholic' and 'Protestant' are not used, but later in the service it is explained that those who would like to receive ashes are welcome to do so. It is emphasised that equally, those who would prefer not to receive ashes may remain seated, to listen to the quiet music, consider the quotations being shown through the projector, to think, or to pray as they choose. The whole college community is together in this often beautiful service, respecting each other's differences.

3.8   When something significant is going on in wider society, the college will often explore it with its student body. During the Queen's Jubilee, for instance, the college held a tea party, including a fun fashion parade, despite the fact that there are more Catholic than Protestant students in the college. During the flags protests the college explored what was going on, in assembly, explaining the background, talking about what was happening and drawing the conclusion that while protest can be justified, violence and rioting cannot.

4.   What do young people say about integration?

4.1   There is a variety of research studies, reports and surveys on the impact of integrated education. The following however are the views of a number of students who attend Drumragh Integrated College, where the voice of students – the major stakeholders of our education system – matters:

4.2   'I really value integrated education because in a sense it teaches children to unlearn any personal grievances against groups of people… School is about learning, becoming a more educated person and academic growth. To me it seems wrong to stunt that growth with segregation of people.'

4.3   'I came to this school because it's the better type of school, because no matter what you believe or where you're from you can make friends with anyone… It is important to meet people from different backgrounds so you can learn about other people's point of view.'

4.4   '… my best friend is a different religion and I'm glad she is because I learn about her and she learns about me and we learn to accept each other.'

4.5   'An integrated school is good because you have more of a community.'

4.6   'The friends I meet inside of school are now some of my best friends outside of school.'

4.7   'The difference between shared education and integrated education is that shared education you still have the different schools with different uniforms only sharing some things for a while but integrated education has all the one uniform and all the one school and you're together all the time.'

4.8   'Stop worrying about the political side of this. Worry about the thousands of lives that depend on integrated education.'

4.9   'In today's society integrated education is fundamental to safe and settled students. The Belfast flag riots are in my opinion a direct result and a fantastic reminder of how people cannot get on… 20,000 people can make a dramatic difference… integrated education has never been more relevant in today's society. Take a look around you.'

5.   What do some parents say about integration?

5.1   The following are comments made by two parents of students at Drumragh

Integrated College:

5.2   'Although some progress has been made politically, Northern Ireland is, in many ways, still a divided society. This has an enormously negative effect on individuals, families, and communities. On a very real level, economical and social advance is compromised, which negatively impacts both on a national as well as on an international level. Real, tangible positive change is badly needed and long overdue. The only way true change can take place at grass-root level is through altering the perspective and perceptions of our young people. Prejudice and stereotypes need to be broken down and fear of "otherness" eradicated. This is a gradual process which can only happen when communities mix on a daily basis.

Integrated schools have a unique opportunity to be at the forefront of this long-term effort by educating young people from all communities together. They need to be given full support by DE in their endeavours to provide co-educational facilities for as many pupils as possible.

The management and staff at Drumragh Integrated College are doing an excellent job at providing the best possible integrated education, with a strong leadership, vision and passion. The teaching body are equally motivated and motivating, forward thinking, advocating inclusion, tolerance and acceptance of all and embracing of differences. I feel very thankful and privileged that my daughter has been able to obtain a place at the school a few years ago. She is thriving academically and personally, is very happy there, and has developed a very mature social attitude. The more children are given such an opportunity, the better for their future and for the future of Northern Ireland.

Sincerely,

Dr Dagmar Corry, PhD, CPsychol, AFHEA, AFBPsS'

5.3   'I think deciding to send a child to a different type of education is difficult here. Both my husband and myself were educated in grammar schools, so our parents made that decision. There is always that worry, are we sacrificing something else because we believe in Integrated Education? We have never regretted sending Ellen here, even after she did both sets of tests for the other schools and had the choice of where to go. Rather mean of us! She is pushed and challenged as we had hoped. Even more importantly, she is also very happy.

Gayle Hegarty
Programme Manager
Drug and Alcohol Training Programme
Western HSCT'

6.   Key barriers, potential enablers and priorities for developing integrated education

6.1   Lack of vision, tribal politics and systemic inertia have restricted the further growth of integrated education; and that is a disgrace.

6.2   Inertia is dangerous when in fact change is needed so urgently, for our legacy to the young people in our schools to be the right one - comparable to the myth of Nero fiddling while Rome burned.

6.3   A key solution is to facilitate integrated education wholeheartedly and actively; for DE and the Assembly to embrace as never before a vision of the potential of education to lead the way in shaping a unified, diverse and peaceful society.

6.4   Parent power has achieved a remarkable 6-7% of the NI school population in integrated education, either by starting new schools from nothing or through transformation. So what could be achieved if both the Department of Education and our political leaders supported it

fully? At present the integrated sector largely continues to move forward despite, rather than because of, full encouragement and facilitation.

6.5 Support that could and should be given to integrated education includes:

- Pro-active, practical support where there is demand for an integrated school in a particular area, either to build from nothing or to transform to integrated status;

- Helping over-subscribed integrated schools to grow;

- Promoting choice and gauging public demand for integrated education, as part of area planning;

- Giving the integrated sector a statutory seat and voice on area planning groups;

- Giving the integrated sector a statutory seat and voice within the new single education and library board;

- In other words, giving each sector a statutory voice and role within the educational system.

7. Conclusions

7.1 We all need a strong vision and committed focus not on the past nor on the status quo, but on how to make life better in the future.

7.2 The integrated sector is well defined and very clear about what it strives to achieve.

7.3 Integrated education should be given equal emphasis, political support and resourcing with quality shared education – two routes to the same vision.

7.4 In a society that is scarred and struggling toward real peace, it seems completely obvious that young people should be educated together – all day, every day. A central goal of integrated education is the transformation of young people's hearts and minds. This is achieved by actively helping them to respect difference and encouraging them to form friendships that break down barriers. This is not always easy, but it matters. And so we can shape a future that includes tolerance, peace and healing.

Nigel Frith

Principal
Drumragh Integrated College

October 2014

Duneane and Moneynick Primary Schools

Duneane Primary School
166 Church Road
Toomebridge
BT41 3RD
Tel: 02879650854
Principal: Mrs Donna Winters

Moneynick Primary School
104 Moneynick Road
Randalstown
BT41 3HS
Tel: 02879650331
Principal: Mrs Emer Hughes

Moneynick Primary and Duneane Primary working together in Shared Education

Our Partnership

Moneynick and Duneane are two rural primary schools which lie on the outskirts of Toomebridge and are situated 1.7 miles from each other. They had been working together over the last ten years and joined the Primary Integrating Enriching Education Project (PIEE) which began in 2009 and were funded by the International Fund for Ireland and Atlantic Philanthropies. Both Moneynick and Duneane are small schools and since the cessation of the PIEE project, have continued to grow and develop as a confederation.

The principals saw how PIEE impacted positively on all areas of their school communities: principals, staff, pupils, parents and governors. For principals and staff, being in PIEE meant that they were able to avail of opportunities to train and plan together.

The Boards of Governors play a vital role in the continuing development of the partnership, supporting joint events showcasing pupils' work. In 2012 a joint subcommittee of Governors was formed. They have overseen the running of the Partnership including the appointment of a shared teacher in 2012 and have played an integral part in our development to date.

The Governors made a joint submission to the Area Plan for Primary Schools in Northern Ireland the outcome of which called for the schools to work together in shared education. Initially our intention was to seek a shared space through investment in a mobile classroom, where our children could learn together and our communities could meet.

After a visit from the Minister of Education to our Partnership in September 2013, we submitted a business plan to the Department of Education outlining our vision for the shared space. The Principals were aware of the existence of Shared Campus Schools in Scotland and visited four schools in Lanarkshire in September 2013. The visit confirmed that the direction our schools were taking could lead to a successful shared future on one campus.

Following an announcement by OFMDFM in early 2014, with full support of governors and parents, we submitted an Expression of Interest in a Shared Campus for our schools. Prior to this the whole school community was involved in a stringent consultation process the outcome of which gave 100% commitment from governors and staff, and over 90% commitment from parents.

What Shared Education means for us?

Over the last number of years, our pupils have taken part in regular shared classes which have now become part of normal school routine. In 2012-2013 we had PIEE funding for a full time shared teacher and since then the two schools have been funding a part-time shared teacher from their own budgets. Funding for transport between the two schools has come from Shared Education at Queens, through Atlantic Philanthropies. Each Monday and Tuesday our pupils work together in single year groups. Our aim is to raise standards across both schools and give our children an opportunity to cement friendships and become comfortable working side by side.

Both schools currently have three composite classes. Shared classes provide our children with the opportunity of being taught in joint, single year groupings. This also benefits the pupils who are left behind with their own class teacher who are also left as a single year group or smaller composite class. The majority of the shared lessons are literacy and numeracy based and areas targeted are identified from both school development plans in line with Count, Read; Succeed. Raising standards in both schools is the priority for our children.

Our current Y7 children have been involved in shared classes since they were in Y1. Sharing is now accepted as a normal part of their school routine. Although harder to quantify, our involvement in shared education has delivered wonderful opportunities for developing friendships and building relationships pupil to pupil, teacher to teacher and family to family. The children have also had the opportunity to reach out to the wider community and develop links with a local Residential Home and with local Sports Clubs.

Our children now have a joint School Choir who performed on Radio and last year achieved second place at Ballymena Festival. Last Christmas they sang for the residents of the nearby Nursing Home. We have also fielded joint Sports Teams at local competitions and would see this developing further on a shared campus.

Moneynick Mothers & Toddlers has welcomed parents and younger siblings from Duneane Primary School, enhancing community cohesion at its most fundamental level. We hope to expand the Mothers & Toddlers provision if we move to a shared campus.

Parents have enjoyed attending joint showcase events and have even taken part in joint parent-only events such as salsa dancing. They have been consulted at every step along our journey and are very supportive of the partnership. Links have been established between both Parent Teacher Associations with joint events to enhance social cohesion and raise some funds for joint activities.

Barriers
- We feel that the biggest barrier to the development of Shared Education and our partnership in particular, is the lack of support and acknowledgement at department level. For a number of years we along with other principals within the PIEE project were under the illusion that the Education Committee at Stormont were aware of the different Shared Education projects that were running within Northern Ireland. Following a visit to both schools by a local MLA we discovered that this was not the case. Our partnership has been seen as 'pathfinding' and yet the education committee was unaware of our existence.

- We feel there is a lack of vision at government level. We hear the words 'SHARED FUTURE' but there is a lack of process in achieving this within education, eg. through our business plan submitted in 2013 it became evident that there was no application process for a shared space. Even though both schools had the support of their managing authorities, there appeared to be no system to follow or no particular individual within the department that we could take advice from.

- For our partnership the biggest barrier to date has been the rejection of our bid for a shared campus announced in July 2014. Without a doubt we are the most pro-active

primary partnership in Northern Ireland and are seen as pathfinders in Shared Education, yet we were told that our bid appeared to be more about co-locating than sharing.

Enablers

- Tremendous support and advice from our local MLAs who have encouraged us to have a voice at Education Committee level. It is important for all partnerships to have cross-party support.

- Pro-active thinkers at education board level who have the vision to create successful projects such as PIEE and have the business acumen to secure funding from external bodies.

- Support from authorities who give encouragement and recognition and source funding for shared partnerships eg. Shared Education at QUB.

- Positive leadership with energetic and enthusiastic staff and governors who share the vision and are aware of the bigger picture.

Priorities and Actions needed to move forward

- Committee for Education who engage with shared education partnerships in Northern Ireland. The Committee would benefit from visiting successful partnerships to witness sharing first-hand.

- Cross party agreement on making shared education a priority.

- A team of active educational practitioners who have first-hand experience of Shared Education directing DENI policy and contributing to decision-making for future programmes of sharing.

- Honesty and integrity in dealing with shared education partnerships and clear guidelines and criteria for any application process.

- Development of a continuum of good practice in sharing with guidance for schools on how to move forward.

Early Years

Early Years Headquarters
6c Wildflower Way
Apollo Road
Belfast
County Antrim
BT12 6TA

T +44 (0)28 9066 2825
F +44 (0)28 9038 1270
info@early-years.org
www.early-years.org

Registered in Northern Ireland No: 23257
Inland Revenue Charity No: XN48519
Formerly known as NIPPA

22/10/2014

Committee for Education

Shared and Integrated Education Inquiry

I. **Table of Contents**

II. Summary

Early Years – the organisation for young children warmly welcomes this opportunity to submit evidence to the Committee's Inquiry. In 2015 the organisation will celebrate 50 years of working to promote and develop high quality, evidence-informed, cross community early childhood services for young children, their families and communities.

We have successfully worked in all communities across Northern Ireland including some of the most divided interface areas in Northern Ireland in delivering projects and activities relating to child focused community based health and education; tackling social and educational inequalities; working with young Traveller children and their families; shared spaces, community development and working with children, practitioners, management boards, parents and carers to develop a culture of respect to the various forms of difference in our society

This submission, in the advancement of approaches to shared and integrated education, emphasises the following:

- Adopting an approach beginning at the earliest levels of education and building on this consistently up through the tiers of the education pathway

- Embracing an ecological approach actively incorporating wider support networks involving parents, families and all communities as well as staff and leadership within schools and education providers

- Focusing on challenges specific to urban and rural areas

- Effective linkages and commitment to resourcing of key policies and strategies

- Capacity building, training and evaluation

- Utilisation of current best practice and evidence locally and internationally

1. Introduction and context of submission

1.1 Early Years[1] is the largest voluntary organisation working with and for all young children 0-12 in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. It is a non-profit making organisation and in 2015 will celebrate 50 years of working to promote and develop high quality, evidence-informed, cross community early childhood services for young children, their families and communities. Our vision is that children are strong, competent and visible in their communities; physically and emotionally healthy; eager and able to learn and respectful of difference. We have currently over 1,000 members across the statutory, community, voluntary and independent sectors supporting the child care and early education needs of over 30,000 children on a daily basis. We have a leadership role in 10 Sure Start projects supporting 15,000 children 0-4 and their families

1.2 Currently Early Years provides a range of information, training, and advice and support services for parents, early childhood care and education providers, management committees and boards, employers, local authorities, departments and agencies. We have successfully worked in some of the most divided interface areas in Northern Ireland. Projects and activities relate to child focused community based health and education; tackling social and educational inequalities; working with young Traveller children and their families; community development and working with children, practitioners, management boards, parents and carers to respect the various forms of difference in our society.

1.3 These and other local and cross-border evidence-based services and projects offered by our organisation also have proved to be internationally applicable through our participation in a number of international partnerships and networks designed to 'export' and share knowledge and best practice concerning peace building, shared spaces and early childhood education and care.

1.4 Early Years welcomes this opportunity to submit written evidence. We participated previously in the study of the Ministerial Advisory Group on the Advancement of Shared Education[2]. This included both the submission of written and oral evidence and facilitating site visits by the Advisory Group members to Hobbyhorse Playgroup and Roden Street Playgroup in Belfast to receive an insight into shared education and the application of the principles of the MIFC Respecting Difference Programme at pre-school level. There is much to be commended in both the recommendation report released by the Group and also in the Minister's statement to the Assembly in October 2013 responding to the recommendations[3].

1.5 The organisation would also be willing to further participate in this process by giving oral evidence to the Committee on anything contained in this submission. 1.6 Commentary on elements of the Terms of Reference set for the Inquiry relevant both to our remit as established above and our practice based experience is as follows.

---

1   For more see http://www.early-years.org/

2   http://www.qub.ac.uk/schools/SchoolofEducation/MinisterialAdvisoryGroup/

3   http://www.deni.gov.uk/advancing_shared_education_-_22_october_2013_docx.pdf

2. The nature and definition of shared and integrated education

2.1 The Committee's undertaking within the set terms of reference to review and explore shared and integrated education across all educational phases is greatly welcomed. The shared/integrated education pathway begins in our pre-school settings, groups, day nurseries, parent and toddler groups and Sure Start programmes operating across the region. This work has always been delivered on a cross-community basis and been underpinned by sound equality of opportunities policies.

2.2 It is vital that the approach to shared and integrated education embraces an ecological framework approach beginning in the earliest years and continuing through primary and secondary education levels. In developing a positive sense of self and others it is essential to address issues of inclusion and exclusion from an early age. It is well documented in early childhood research that children as young as three years old are aware of difference and by age six can develop negative attitudes and behaviour towards others who are different[4]. Such work must be underpinned by a clear perspective on children's rights and universal services to promote accessibility and inclusion of all children towards the best outcomes.

2.3 Relevant approaches must then also embrace wider support networks involving parents, families and communities as well as schools and education providers. In this area opportunities must be provided for parents from diverse backgrounds to share their beliefs, concerns and positive learning experiences across socio-economic, ethnic, cultural and gender borders with other parents and agencies. Furthermore, there needs to be outreach work built in to reach hard to access or hard to engage families in order to address barriers to participation and ensure equality of opportunity. Such approaches must be fully understood and supported by Management Committees and Boards of Governors.

2.4 Engaging with parents and other adults is also vital in order to address the intergenerational transmission of prejudicial attitudes to young children. Engaging with parents, carers and practitioners courageously therefore allows for attitudes and behaviour to be explored, including addressing prejudices and stereotypes. It is vital that space is created that is both safe and challenging for exploring these issues.

3. Key barriers and enablers for shared and integrated education

3.1 Barriers- Potential barriers include:

- Lack of recognition of the impact that emotional development and feeling excluded can have on children's ability to learn.

- Failures to actively engage or adequately collate the views of hard to reach communities.

- Lack of training and support for practitioner staff to actively and reflectively implement a shared education approach.

- Lack of value placed on vital role practitioners in the pre-school sector play in establishing cross-community relations and advancing shared education.

- Lack of understanding of and between the various roles (teachers, practitioners, policy makers) that have a key part to play in this process.

- Impact of conflict on attitudes and behaviour in Northern Ireland and continuing inter group and intra group tensions.

- Prejudicial attitudes and beliefs at child, parent, community and governance levels.

- Fear of loss of cultural/political/religious identity by participation in shared education.

- Vested interests in maintaining the status quo.

---

4   Too Young to Notice? The Cultural and Political Awareness of 3-6 Year Olds in Northern Ireland Connolly, P, Smith, A. & Kelly, B. (2002)

- Bad or poor experiences from previous initiatives that have not worked which dissuade people from coming on board again due to a belief that their voice is not being satisfactorily heard.

- Programmes not being sufficiently large in scale or developmental enough to be effective and being more than just bringing children together for short periods of time.

- Agencies working in isolation.

- Short term funding of certain projects which does not lend well to the in-depth work that needs to be done or the necessary time required.

- Schools being seen as autonomous, separate units instead of interdependent networks from a policy and funding perspective.

- Overemphasis on creating new programmes rather than looking at what is currently operating well.

3.2 Enablers

3.2.1 Early Years has designed, developed and implemented a flagship programme focused on developing respect for diversity and inclusion in the early years which is informed by and includes all of the principles outlined in section two above.

3.2.2 This is highly innovative in that the approach addresses inclusion in all its aspects focusing on ability, race, cultural ethnic and religious identity through age appropriate programmes. The Media Initiative for Children (MIFC) Respecting Difference Programme has been externally evaluated[5] though a randomised controlled trial and found to have a positive effect on young children's attitude towards and respect for others who are different.

3.2.3 The MIFC Respecting Difference Programme is currently linked to relevant curricula for children aged from two to seven years and consideration is being given to further development of the programme covering the timeframe right through to the end of primary school.

3.2.4 Through shared parent workshops and in management committee/board of governors workshops, adults have the opportunity to share their own experiences including experiences which as children shaped their identities and attitudes. They also have opportunities in an informal way for discussion and sharing with others who have been raised with different perspectives and attitudes. In this way parents, teachers, pre-school staff, governors and management committee members are themselves engaging, reflecting and building their own understanding of others who are different.

3.2.5 Many elements associated with the MIFC Respecting Difference programme make clear links into not only the pre-school but also the Foundation Stage curriculum (Personal Development and Mutual Understanding) and Community Relations, Equality and Diversity in Education (CRED) by addressing such themes as self-awareness, similarities and differences, relationships and feelings and emotions.

3.2.6 The key strengths of MIFC Respecting Difference are that it places a strong emphasis on promoting socio-emotional development as the foundation upon which diversity work can be undertaken and it looks at diversity and inclusion in all its aspects focusing on ability, race, cultural ethnic and religious identity through age appropriate programmes. The programme looks first at sameness before addressing difference. This is done using persona dolls where a character is developed which incorporates different aspects of identity. The children see the points of similarity and subsequently the points of difference. The persona dolls are an ideal practical tool to encourage the development of empathy, to see a situation from another's perspective.

---

5   Evaluation of the Media Initiative for Children: http://www.early-years.org/coral/research.php

3.2.7   It is vital therefore that children's identity is validated in the school or pre-school setting. One of the innovative aspects of the MIFC is that it explicitly addresses issues of identity with young children rather than ignoring or attempting to neutralise identity. In this way the ethos and identity of individuals, families and communities are respected and validated while children also grow in awareness of the identity of others.

3.2.8   Practices that foster multiple identities need to avoid two pitfalls – colour-blindness and tokenism. Colour-blindness is the denial of differences, very often out of an honest concern to treat 'all children equally'. The message children get from this is to be silent about difference. Tokenism is an effort to be inclusive in a limited time-bound way such as acknowledging cultural difference but only on a particular day e.g. Chinese New Year. Such activities risk being both patronising and stigmatising, in that they overlook the complexities of children's personal histories and family cultures and ignore socio-economic and other differences.

3.2.9   An example of this reflection from evaluation was that parents from the Unionist tradition participating in the MIFC programme in the Derry/Londonderry area commented positively on the fact that the programme actively engaged in open, honest dialogue with aspects of their tradition, for example in portrayal of marching bands. They felt that this contrasted sharply with other programmes which attempted to neutralise identity: "Looking at this town, people from the British tradition do tell their children not to mention certain things because of the fear factor. I've even encountered this in integrated education where people are not encouraged to talk about things like the Orders, the parades, it's a no-go area."

4.   Approaches and good practice models

4.1   Engagement and partnership working

4.1.1   In addition to many of the core principles associated with the MIFC Respecting Difference Programme outlined above we would further draw attention, concerning engagement and partnership working best practice with a shared focus to improve outcomes for children, to the Toybox Project[6] strategic partnership implemented by Early Years - the organisation for young children.

4.1.2   The Toybox Project is a rights-based outreach service development model which aims to significantly reduce social and education inequalities experienced by young Traveller children aged 0-4, maximise participation in available programmes and services and strengthen capacities, engagement and partnership working.

4.1.3   The Toybox project also was subject to an independent evaluation[7] which stated that in terms of service delivery, the project has been very successful in terms of engaging families and supporting the development of children through play. Furthermore the evaluation found that the project has been very successful at filling the gap, and being a catalyst, between families and statutory support services, health visitors, social workers and others in the statutory sector. We believe that this innovative project represents a successful outreach model for enhancing child development outcomes for disadvantaged groups. By using the above practical strategies, informed by a robust programme design, the principles of equality of opportunity and access to education are translated into inclusive practice in the classroom.

4.2   Focusing on challenges specific to both urban and rural areas

4.2.1   Many communities in rural regions can encounter invisible community division lines with fewer opportunities for rural interfaces and have high levels of new immigrants in the area due to employment opportunities. A greater level of detail and focus is also required in these respects to promote social inclusion, equality and respecting difference in the areas of gender, religion, ethnicity, disability and sexual orientation.

---

6   http://www.early-years.org/toybox/

7   'Toybox: Early Years development through play for Traveller children'; http://www.early-years.org/toybox/toybox-evaluation.pdf

4.2.2   Over recent years our organisation has been involved in a range of success initiatives and projects in this area.

4.2.3   One practical example of this has been delivery of the Media Initiative for Children (MIFC) Respecting Difference Programme through the Fermanagh Shared Education Programme, to schools in Co Fermanagh to provide a vital foundation for teachers, boards of governors, parents, children and local communities to successfully engage in the provision of shared education. Every primary school in County Fermanagh has used the Media Initiative Respecting Difference Programme as the basis of their shared education initiatives.

4.2.4   Furthermore, the organisation has been involved in the implementation of a 'Faces and Spaces' project, funded by Atlantic Philanthropies/OFMDFM's Contested Spaces programme, in schools and early years settings in five contested/interface communities in Northern Ireland including urban interfaces in Belfast and Derry and rural contested spaces in Castlederg and Newtownstewart. Such work has given us a model in designing and implementing a robust evidence-based approach with pre-school, primary, youth, parents and the wider community. This project has been robustly evaluated by the University of Ulster.

4.2.5   The project was overseen by both a regional steering group and importantly by four local partnerships which ensured that the schools, playgroups and SureStart projects had ownership of the project and that a shared community development ethos underpinned the programme.

4.2.6   This approach enabled the development of a community of learning based upon shared beliefs and approaches to inclusion to be created around the needs of all children aged between two and seven in the area. The local partnerships met on a rotational basis in each other's premises to plan the development of the programme. In addition to implementing MIFC within their own settings, the schools and pre-school groups came together for shared implementation, for shared parent workshops and for shared management committee/board of governors workshops.

4.2.7   The shared implementation was very different from a basic contact approach to shared activity. Settings came together to plan purposeful activities that engaged with the programme themes around inclusion. Together, they had opportunities to participate and reflect on issues of identity, culture, race, ethnicity and ability communicated in an age appropriate way.

4.2.8   In further reflection of the significance of such issues in and for rural communities our organisation, in partnership with the Northern Ireland Rural Development Council and the Border Counties Childhood Network implemented a Rural Respecting Difference Programme[8] part-funded under the PEACE programme, based on the MIFC Respecting Difference Programme.

4.2.9   This project brings another dimension to the MIFC Respecting Difference Programme as it gives Early Years an opportunity to engage with harder to reach families in rural areas through an innovative approach to inclusion and diversity related work.

4.2.10   The Rural Respecting Difference Programme is aimed at rural-based primary schools and afterschool clubs in a number of geographic areas along the border in both Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland across counties Armagh, Cavan, Donegal, Down, Fermanagh, Leitrim, Louth, Monaghan and Tyrone.

4.2.11   The Programme includes workshop based training delivered by Early Years Specialists; comprehensive curriculum resource packs containing persona puppets, cartoon/media messages, CD of songs and rhymes, age appropriate jigsaws and games; a Teacher/Leader Service Design Manual; ongoing on-site support from an Early Years Specialist to assist programme implementation; Support for Board of Governors or Management Committees

---

8   http://www.early-years.org/rural-rd/index.php

in practical delivery of equality opportunities and anti-bullying policies and opportunities to participate in good relations workshops and develop tailored good relations plan for school or after school.

4.2.12 The Rural dimension of the MIFC Respecting Difference programme has recently been further enhanced with the addition of a new message, persona doll and associated resources addressing issues from a rural perspective[9].

4.2.13 The content for these was developed by a steering group consisting of representatives from the Rural Development Council, Early Years and the Border Counties Childhood Network alongside the GAA, Grand Orange Lodge of Ireland, Southern Education & Library Board, South Tyrone Empowerment Programme and South Armagh SureStart. This programme has been independently evaluated as a very successful model for shared approaches in rural areas.

5.   Priorities and actions

5.1   Capacity building, training and evaluation

5.1.1   The considerable capacity building in the initial phases and on-going support elements of this work cannot be understated. The work of Early Years has always been underpinned by a strong community development, grass-roots mobilisation ethos focused on helping communities to assess the need for, develop and manage their own early years setting.[10]

5.1.2   Here we would advocate reference to many of the required principles and skill-sets as reflected in the work of a Community Development Team within our organisation which works directly with independent and voluntary organisations in the sector by building capacity and empowering local communities and services; providing start-up support and information and ongoing training, information, coaching and mentoring in governance, leadership and management to develop quality sustainable childcare services.

5.1.3   Shared and integrated education must facilitate the acceptance and inclusion of children from all backgrounds and of all abilities. It would also be suggested, based on practical experiences and engagement, that there is a need for greater awareness raising and training around the Section 75 legislative provision as not all who have a key role to play in this would be fully aware of the categories included in Section 75.

5.1.4   Shared and integrated education can potentially provide opportunities for developing a wide range of knowledge and life skills. Examples relevant to the early years include the development of empathy and the ability to socially and emotionally understand the position of others, problem solving and the ability to reflect on the best course of action if someone is excluded. Equally fairness, sharing and taking turns develops not only social skills but early mathematical experiences for young children and identifying sameness and differences encourages a respect for diversity as well as encouraging children to explore and understand the world around them.

5.1.5   To fully develop and foster such essential life skills practitioners and parents need to be skilled in order to support their children, their setting and each other and adequate time and resources have to be allocated for this.

5.1.6   In relation to initial teacher education, there is a need to ensure that knowledge and understanding of diversity issues inform all aspects of the curriculum. In addition, specific components of training are required that seek to provide teachers and practitioners with the knowledge and skills required to deal skilfully and effectively with issues of diversity in their own classrooms and settings. Regular evaluation of programmes must also be carried out to review services and make any necessary changes.

---

9   http://www.early-years.org/rural-rd/meet-lucy.php

10   http://www.early-years.org/committee-mgt/

5.1.7 A practical example of this is again provided by the Fermanagh Shared Education Programme which has involved our organisation carrying out training with teachers from year one and two to implement principles associated with the MIFC Respecting Difference programme and come together with partner schools to carry out related activities with children in the area.

5.2 Adoption of an ecological approach: participatory whole-community engagement

5.2.1 Early Years firmly endorses participative approaches whereby the active participation of relevant members and the children, families and communities and agencies they represent form an essential part of the development, evaluation and ongoing monitoring of progress on the implementation and delivery of any plans, policies or strategies. Early Years is in the process of implementing and establishing a robust focus on participatory evaluation pedagogy and practice.

5.2.2 Prior to the adoption of this approach, research on and evaluation of the work of Early Years had been carried out by external evaluators and in the main focused on quantitative research methodology. The evidence gathered has provided greater credibility and visibility for the work of Early Years locally and nationally. Building upon this culture of evaluation and research, Early Years now wish to develop a capacity for participatory evaluation within the organisation and sector so that Early Years staff become skilled in on-going evaluation and reflective practice and develop the ability to use this evidence to further improve practice and programmes.

5.2.3 The enhanced and more developed usage of more participatory approaches to evaluation will not only help us understand how our projects and programmes are improving outcomes for our youngest citizens but it will also enable us to assess our impact and embrace a more fuller and participative method of engaging with our members, customers and stakeholders in truly finding out from them the types of the information, support and materials they need and how best to provide that to them.

5.3 Effective linkages and adequate resourcing of key strategies

5.3.1 The effective linkage and adequate commitment to resourcing of such key strategies as Delivering Social Change, Together: Building a United Community, the Programme for Government, the Racial Equality Strategy and other policies and strategies is strongly encouraged. To these we would further add the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child; the Child Poverty Strategy, the Traveller Child in Education Action Framework, the Early Years Learning to Learn Framework, CRED and, given not only the considerable developmental benefits for young children but also wider employment, economic and social opportunities and benefits[11], the Bright Start Child Care Strategy, presently under development.

5.4 Consideration of best practice and evidence both locally and internationally

5.4.1 Early Years continues to build upon a significant knowledge base derived from practical experience and evidence-based research relating to diversity and inclusion with our youngest citizens, their carers and families and the communities in which they live.

5.4.2 We feel that it is vital that practice is informed by impact based evaluations of previous initiatives and through international and local best practice and partnerships. We support the development of such measures and see this as vital in the growth of future social and economic developments.

5.4.3 Services and projects provided by our organisation also extend to the Republic of Ireland, through HighScope and other cross-border initiatives, and beyond though a number of international partnerships and projects designed to 'export' knowledge and best practice. Some recent examples of this include:

---

11 See 'Contribution of the Voluntary, Community and Independent Early Years Sector in Northern Ireland' report; Early Years; 2011 http://www.early-years.org/policy/state-of-sector.php

- An International Network on Peace Building with Young Children[12] project leading the sharing of best practice across countries experiencing conflict and post-conflict situations through the use and development of internationally applicable programmatic tools and resources and contribution to the ongoing implementation of a Masters Programme on Applied Peace and Conflict Studies with early years, in partnership with the International Conflict Research Institute (INCORE) at the University of Ulster;

- Participation in the Network for the Quality in Early Childhood Education from 0-6 years (NetQ6) , which is a cooperative network with educative and training institutions in Europe. The project aims are to compare, analyze and face the socio challenges that arise in the growth of early childhood and compile the best practices in the field to find solutions for the new realities and special needs found in a range of education systems;

- Contribution to the work of the Partnership for Reconciliation through Early Childhood Education and Development in Europe (PRECEDE)[13] which aims to support civil society influence over reconciliation process and cohesion through education in early years in the Balkan region and Europe. It will develop a sustainable Balkan Region Network of civil society organisations concerned with young children and promoting acceptance of others and respect for diversity; develop sustainable country level networks of civil society organisations promoting acceptance of others and respect for diversity through early childhood education (ECD) in the Western Balkan region countries; and will link country level networks and the PRECEDE Network of civil society organisations with the International Network for Young Children in Conflict and Post-conflict Countries;

- Participation in the Determinants to Reduce health Inequity Via Early childhood, Realising fair employment and Social protection (DRIVERS) project funded by the 7th Framework Programme to promote health equity through policy and practice in early childhood development, employment & working conditions, and income & social protection;

- Supporting the delivery of pre-school programmes within Serbia and Turkey;

- Hosting annual Service Learning Trips in partnership with Wheelock College, Boston to allow students from the College undertaking disciplines in psychology and early childhood development a unique opportunity to experience the work that is currently underway in Northern Ireland and study exemplary peace building efforts in early childhood settings;

- Hosting visits by Turkish delegates from the Ministry of Education and UNICEF to view models of good practice, visit settings and participate in round table debate; and

- Advocating, along with other members of the Early Childhood Peace Consortium[14], UNICEF and the Global Movement for the Culture of Peace, for the next Millenium Development Goals and a new UN Resolution to include peace building through Early Childhood Development.

5.4.4   Such activity enables Early Years to both consolidate and extend its international relationships and to continue to work to develop practice materials, training, advocacy tools and strategies on reconciliation and peace building through early years programmes to the benefit of local and international service providers.

6.   Expression of interest in the further submission of evidence 6.1 Early Years welcomes this opportunity to submit written evidence. The organisation would also be willing to further participate in the process by giving oral evidence to the Committee on anything contained in this submission.

---

12   http://www.early-years.org/international/

13   http://www.tacso.org/doc/PRECEDE%20corrected.pdf

14   http://childstudycenter.yale.edu/international/peace/ecpc/index.aspx

Educate Together

contents

①

Learn Together to Live Together

2

A Brief Introduction

Educate Together National Schools are a specific type of state-funded primary school in Ireland. They are part of the National School system that was established in 1831 and which, together with the Special Schools, comprise all State-funded primary education in Ireland.

All National Schools, whether Roman Catholic, Protestant, Islamic, Jewish or Educate Together schools are funded by the State on an equal basis. They operate the same National Curriculum, follow the same Rules for Boards of Management and are staffed by teachers who have the same level of professional qualifications and recognition.

What Makes Educate Together Schools Different?

Where schools differ from each other is in their "ethos". The ethos of a school describes its spirit and character. This is built upon its aims and objectives, its policies and procedures and should be reflected in all interactions within the school community. Thus, the ethos of a school impacts strongly on the kind of education delivered to its pupils.

The Patron and the Board of Management

Within the Irish National School System, responsibility for determining the ethos of a school rests with the "Patron". The main legislation that governs education in Ireland (the Education Act 1998) confers significant powers on school patrons.

Amongst other powers, the Patron:-

- establishes a new school

- sets up its Board of Management

- selects the first Principal before the school opens

- directly appoints two members of the Board, approves the selection of other members and appoints the Chairperson

- approves the appointment of all teaching staff

- lays down the fundamental ethos base of the Board.

Under the Education Act, the Board of Management must undertake to run the school according to the ethos determined by the Patron. In addition, one half hour period of teaching per day for children in the school is reserved for the Patron's exclusive religious curriculum.

In the denominational schools that constitute the majority of National Schools in Ireland, the Patron is usually the Bishop of the religion concerned, but in an Educate Together National School, the Patron is a company limited by guarantee whose activities are regulated by its Memo and Articles and the Companies Acts and whose decisions are made at General Meetings of its members. This has created a modern, transparent and accountable model of patronage that is defined in clear legal terms.

The fundamental legal concept of Educate Together's patronage is that the Board of an Educate Together school is bound to operate a school that delivers equality of access and esteem to all children, irrespective of their social, cultural and religious backgrounds.

4

This very simple idea is the foundation of all policy and practice in the school, whether it is the enrolment policy, the way that the Board carries out its work, the way that a code of behaviour is developed or the manner in which the curriculum is delivered.

The legal documents of Educate Together commit both the Patron and the Board of all schools to uphold the following principles.

All schools should be:

Multi-denominational i.e. all children having equal rights of access to the school, and children of all social, cultural and religious backgrounds being equally respected

Co-educational and committed to encouraging all children to explore their full range of abilities and opportunities

Child centred in their approach to education

Democratically run with active participation by parents in the daily life of the school, whilst positively affirming the professional role of the teachers

Ref: The Educate Together Charter

Commitment to the Educate Together Charter

It is important to note that these principles are not 'mission statements' or merely statements of aspiration or intent. They form real commitments to deliver an education that reflects these binding principles. The Board of Management of an Educate Together school must judge its performance against these core principals at all levels of school activity.

It is worth considering these commitments in some detail.

5

Multi-denominational

From its formation in the mid-1970s, Educate Together has defined this term to include all denominations of all faiths. Thus Educate Together schools are committed to the principle that all religious backgrounds should be equally respected in the operation of the school. Included in this definition are humanist, agnostic and atheistic viewpoints and a generic concept of 'personal creed'.

The term 'respect' is carefully chosen. There is a clear distinction made between the concept of accommodation or tolerance of difference and the concept of respect. Toleration and accommodation inherently imply that a majority view must make allowances for minority views and minorities must make requests to achieve this accommodation; respect implies care and equal treatment as of right.

In practice, the objective of an Educate Together school is to create a school culture and practice in which the identity of every child is guaranteed active support. Neither the child nor parents or guardians should have to ask for that respect to be given.

The school works hard to create a positive, comfortable atmosphere. The underlying concept is that human diversity enhances life, enriches cultures and provides huge educational resources for current and future generations.
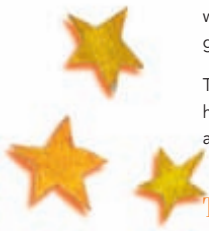
The Ethical Education Curriculum

In an Educate Together school*, the daily period of time set aside for the patron's religious education programme is used to deliver our Ethical Education Curriculum. This programme is called the "Learn Together" curriculum and is published by Educate Together. It is subject to review and development by the Education Committee and decisions at Annual General Meetings of the organisation. A copy of the curriculum is available from the school or from Educate Together.

The programme is divided into four strands 'Moral and Spiritual Development', 'Justice and Equality', 'Belief Systems' and 'Ethics and the Environment'. The curriculum specifically addresses the Educate Together ethos and it is here that the values that the school seeks to model in its 'characteristic spirit' are articulated and explained in greater depth.

Please note: In some Educate Schools opened before 2000, this programme may operate locally under different names and headings.

6

In the strand called 'Belief Systems', the programme explains and explores the major belief systems in the world in an educational manner, teaching children about these faiths and beliefs without endorsing any particular one as religious truth. During the year, an Educate Together school may mark - in an age appropriate way - festivals such as Chinese New Year, Easter, Bealtaine, Hindu Festival of Lights (Diwali), Harvest Festivals, Samhain (Halloween), Ramadan and Eid, Hannuka and Christmas. The programme allows the school to explore the similarities and differences with the older celebrations that underlie many of these festivals. Examples would be the Celtic festivals and practices that underpin Easter or the solstice festivals that occur around Christmas.

It is normal that the treatment of these events becomes integrated into the whole school programme, involving drama, art, music, history and geography and also in many cases, parental and community participation. This may mean exploring wider cultural themes such as cuisine and family celebrations. The range of such activities within an individual school will be determined by local conditions.

The educational aim of this work is to model positive information about world faiths in a respectful atmosphere which highlights rights and responsibilities.

Doctrinal Instruction

In addition to offering the ethical education programme, Boards of Management of Educate Together schools enable any group of parents who wish to use the facilities of the school outside school hours to organise specific doctrinal instruction classes. In most Educate Together schools, for instance, Roman Catholic sacramental preparation is available in these out-of-hours programmes; these are organised by Roman Catholic parents often with the direct participation of the local parish. These classes mix naturally with other extra-curricular activities of the school. Parents of other faiths are similarly facilitated. It is important to note however, that the Board is not responsible for the establishment of such classes and is only involved in so far as to ensure that they are responsibly organised, covered by insurance and that the necessary steps have been taken to ensure the safety of the children attending. There is never any obligation placed on a child, parent or staff member to become involved in doctrinal instruction.

8

This approach to 'multi-denominationalism' has a number of consequences:

- When this model of school ethos is conscientiously implemented, no child is ever placed in a position in which they feel themselves an outsider in the school programme because of their family or individual identity. The approach minimises the situations in which parents or children feel the need to absent themselves from aspects of school life.

- It maximises the school's ability to address the religious rights of all families without favour or discrimination.

- Responsibility for religious formation of children is assumed to be that of the family and religious organisations, while the responsibility of the school is to provide a safe, caring and respectful environment for all children. This encourages children to have a strong and secure contact with their own identity and comfort in interaction with people of different faiths and persuasions.

- The human rights of teachers and other workers in the school are addressed, as staff are never placed in a position in which they may be required to put forward as religious truth a viewpoint that they may not themselves hold.

Whilst Educate Together holds that this way of treating religious difference in an Irish school context offers many advantages, we appreciate that there are families for whom this model may not be suitable. For instance, an Educate Together school depends on parents who are happy to allow their children to explore and be exposed to different religious views and who do not regard it as their religious duty to seek to persuade others of their beliefs. In the case of families who observe strict guidelines around their children's exposure to artwork, games or sports of other faiths, a denominational school of their conscience, or a recognised programme of home education may well be a more appropriate choice. If such options are not available in the locality, however, Educate Together schools will attempt to handle these questions as sensitively as possible.

From an educational perspective, the inclusive nature of the Educate Together ethical programme permeates and influences all teaching in the school. The focus is on an explorative approach to learning that is managed and facilitated by the teacher. Children are encouraged to gain personal understandings in a creative and supportive learning environment. They are encouraged to evaluate

9

information, form judgements and articulate these judgements in a supportive, respectful and safe environment.

Educate Together schools promote an approach to education which is based on the core values of mutual respect, self-esteem, dignity and critical awareness.

The child is formally recognised as a participant in the education process and a valued part of the learning organisation that is Educate Together. Participation in school affairs and listening to the voices of the children is part of the democracy that underpins the school. This core value of partnership aims to nurture a deep appreciation of the concepts of participation and rights in society, organisations and the world.

The approach taken to ethical education in Educate Together schools aims to directly promote the life skills that are essential to a generation of children, growing up into a diverse and varied social environment. Their adult experience will be genuinely global in scope.

Co-educational

The co-educational principle was included in the Educate Together Charter at a time when co-educational schools were in a minority. Today, this is no longer the case and the significance of this element of our charter has changed. It now obliges the Board of an Educate Together school to work to ensure that all children are empowered to fulfil their potential irrespective of gender.

Co-educational education is far more than simply putting girls and boys into the same classroom and teaching them the same curriculum. Instead it should ensure that the school develops a comprehensive programme to counter gender stereotyping in all its forms. Schools should be pro-active in promoting an approach to learning that encourages and supports the wide variety and range of talents among the children irrespective of gender.

This is a complex issue that a school cannot solve on its own; nevertheless it must be addressed and discussed within schools in partnership with parents, teachers and students. The significance of this element of a school's work should not be underestimated. The rebalancing of gender roles based on

10

ensure that the school develops a comprehensive programme to counter gender stereotyping in all its forms

equality and respect is central to the growth and development of society and Educate Together is committed to ensuring that children are given every opportunity to explore and develop an equitable approach to gender. As a result of its place in Educate Together's Charter, active encouragement of children of both sexes, and the combating of gender-based discrimination is an important part of the 'school plan' in an Educate Together school.

Child-centred

The Curriculum of National Schools and the approach adopted in the training of National School teachers has been defined as "child-centred" for many years. However, the inclusion of this term in the Educate Together Charter as a founding principle means rather more than the definition of a teaching philosophy or the articulation of the national curriculum. It defines another element of the policy formation of an Educate Together school. It obliges its Board to take decisions primarily based on the broad educational and developmental needs of the children over and above other external factors. This for instance, would influence decisions on opening hours, school holidays, code of behaviour and allocation of funds. Many of these decisions involve striking a balance between conflicting obligations. Nevertheless, this aspect of Educate Together's Charter ensures that the needs of the children of the school strongly influence the decision making process.

It should be noted that we refer to the "children of the school". A school is a collective organisation that strives to address the individual needs of every child. However, any school must balance these needs with the general interests of all the children.

12

Democratically-run

All Educate Together schools have been set up by volunteer groups of parents in a community. As patron body, Educate Together facilitates this process and empowers those involved by providing advice, training and support in negotiating with relevant organisations, including the Department of Education and Science. The key stakeholders in the process are the parents and supporters who tackle the difficult and complex task of establishing the school. As a result, parents have a vital role in the operation of the school and its ethos reflects this. High levels of parental involvement in the work of the school are encouraged. The Charter of Educate Together obliges the school's Board to encourage and welcome this involvement whilst balancing it with an equal obligation to "positively affirm the professional role of the teacher".

Educate Together schools have been pioneers in the development of the concept of partnership between parents and teachers in the operation of schools. A critical element of this lies in the involvement of parents and guardians in the educational process itself. This is achieved through the provision of support for the teacher inside and outside the classroom and in providing educational activities that are not available to the school in the normal way.

Examples of such support include:

- participation in classroom activities

- the organising of extra-curricular activities

- participation in educational support activities such as paired reading.

- help with the artistic, musical, dramatic, linguistic or science and technology programmes

- support in the delivery of the ethical curriculum

- support in the maintenance of the school building

- serving on Boards of Management and other school committees.

(14)

Educate Together and the Community

Once a school opens itself up to the participation of parents, guardians, grandparents and the community, it has access to a wide and rich range of resources that would be impossible to provide by funding alone. This is of great support to the teachers in the school and of immense educational benefit to the children.

It requires skill and care to operate a primary school which respects the delicate balance between the intense individual commitment of parents to their child's education and the professional, objective care and attention of highly qualified teaching professionals. Educate Together is committed to ensuring that schools nurture this partnership and provides training and support for school Boards in order to maximise the potential of this approach.

The involvement of parents in partnership with the staff provide children with examples of practical community co-operation. This is a powerful support to the values articulated in the classroom. Children thrive in this atmosphere and are similarly inspired to work together in diverse settings in order to achieve common goals.

This approach to education promotes the democratic involvement of children in the school. We have found that it is possible to operate effective Students' Councils in primary schools and that it is vital to the success of codes of behaviour that children and parents directly participate in the drawing up of such policies. Once children have a safe space in which they can participate, assured of support of teachers and parents, they can influence the growth of many other school policies and have done so very successfully. In recent years, for instance, many school environmental policies have been successfully driven by children's committees and have resulted in the awarding of Green Flags to many schools.

16

In recent years many school environmental policies have been successfully driven by children's committees and have resulted in the awarding of Green Flags to many schools

Conclusion

This is a very brief overview of some of the key concepts involved in the Educate Together model of National School in Ireland.

Educate Together does not claim any exclusive rights to these ideas. Many of them are implemented in other schools in Ireland and abroad and we fully endorse the efforts of dedicated educators operating in schools of different patronage.

We do not see our future as an exclusive or niche provider in the Irish system. Rather we see the sector as part of a complementary development, providing choice where there has been no choice. We are committed to work with other providers to bring the structure of primary education into balance with the needs of our rapidly changing society and to address the human rights of children, parents and teachers.

We hope that this booklet has been helpful in answering some of the questions about an Educate Together school and our aims as an educational charity. If you would like to know more, would like to enrol your child in an Educate Together school or help us with our work, further information is available from our website or from our national office.

We look forward to meeting and working with many people and organisations to provide an educational system that is inclusive and respectful of all.

For more information, check out our website on:- http://www.educatetogether.ie

or contact us at:-

Email: info@educatetogether.ie

Post:-   Educate Together, 8HA CentrePoint, Oak Drive, Dublin 12

T: Int + 353 (0)1 4292500

F: Int + 353 (0)1 4292502

(18)

Design by Slick Fish Design, Illustrations by Sarah Cunningham

Equality Commission for Northern Ireland

EQUALITY COMMISSION FOR NORTHERN IRELAND

Inquiry into Shared Education and Integrated Education

October 2014

Table of Contents

1 Introduction

1.1 We welcome the opportunity to make a submission to the Education Committee of the Northern Ireland Assembly, to assist in their Inquiry into Shared and Integrated Education.

1.2 The Commission's response is confined to those areas of the inquiry that are core to our remit, responsibilities and expertise[1].

1.3 The Commission intends the positions set out in this paper to be forward facing, mindful of the past but not bound to it. The Commission has referenced evidence on sharing in education and educational inequalities throughout the submission. The submission also makes some suggestions as to how existing education policy may afford additional opportunities to advance shared education.

2 Summary of Recommendations

2.1 The Commission considers that societal mixing and social cohesion is limited by separation in our education provision. It is the Commission's view that a system of shared education has a central role to play in advancing a shared society. The Commission also recognises the important role that education can play in cultural development.

2.2 Aligned to the focus of the enquiry our submission, in summary, includes:

With regards to a definition and obligation in statute:
- The Commission's recognises the benefits of an **agreed definition of 'shared education'**, supported by clarity on the **inter-relationship between 'shared' education and 'integrated' education**; and how they will collectively interact to achieve overarching policy goals.
- We consider that such a definition and policy framework must:
  - Ensure that sharing **impacts meaningfully and substantively on every learner**
  - Ensure that a shared experience should be **central to the education system as a whole**, encompassing at **all stages of educational provision** – pre-school;

---

[1] See **Annex 1** for further information on our remit.

early years; primary; post-primary; special needs; and tertiary levels.
- routinely teach learners together via **a shared curriculum in shared classes**.
- better provide learners with **shared awareness,** understanding and experience of the **value and range of diverse cultures, identities and backgrounds** in Northern Ireland; while also enabling learners from different cultures/communities to **experience a shared society.**

- We **recommend** that the above is taken into account in the development of a definition of 'shared education'
- We recommend that any definition providing for a continuum of sharing ensures that sharing is central to the system of education as a whole and that it impacts meaningfully and substantively on every learner.
- We consider that 'Shared Education', once appropriately defined, and its inter-relationship with 'integrated education' made clear, **is likely to benefit from an appropriate obligation in statute, supplementing but not replacing the existing Article 64 obligation** on integrated education.

With regards to barriers,
- we **highlight separateness** in the education system and summarise research regarding **a range of barriers to shared and integrated education**. We recommend that the Department **utilises lessons** drawn from the existing body of research[2] regarding sharing in education
- we recommend action to address wider issues linked to sharing in education (including **academic selection** at age 11; **teacher training** to advance shared education; the removal of the **teachers' exemption under FETO**; and to gain a better understanding of the reasons for, and impacts of, any **differential patterns of enrolment** to education providers).
- that action is taken to ensure **coordination** across relevant policies and programmes.

---

[2] Our 2012 Submission to the Ministerial Advisory Group on Shared Education summarises a range of research regarding integrated education and the QUB Shared Education Programme.

Equality Commission for Northern Ireland   Page | 2

With regards to **enablers**, we continue to highlight the clear opportunities to **build upon existing education policy** – including:

- How **Area Learning Partnerships** / Communities might effectively encourage sharing between providers from different sectors / management types – including those not already involved in community relations work.
- How funding can be used to incentivise increased sharing on cross-sectoral and ability lines, including via the common funding formula.
- The importance of key school level enablers including high-quality contact; school leadership; links between teachers; a focus on the curriculum and the sharing of resources between teachers.
- The importance of **guidance** for schools who wish to embark on shared education and for those who wish to move toward greater interdependency.
- The importance of **Indicators and Evaluation** to measure and review sharing and collaboration in education provision and governance – both to acknowledge success and promote improvement.
- The importance of **data collection, across all Section 75 grounds** and FSM eligibility, for all educational projects, including key Delivering Social Change projects.

With regards to the specific areas raised in the Inquiry terms of reference

- We note the potential offered by the **Community Relations, Equality and Diversity (CRED) policy** and the calls for it to be reviewed. We **encourage** steps to maximise the effective use of CRED and available funding to support the advancement of equality of opportunity and good relations, via CRED and the school curriculum.
- We reiterate the importance of **engaging with pupils, parents, education providers and wider stakeholders** to communicate the rationale for the proposed system - to take account of barriers and enablers; to improve associated policy proposals and to incentivise any moves.
- We reiterate our recommendation that the Department explore how a shared experience can be central to the education system as a whole, encompassing at all stages of educational provision – including **routine sharing and**

collaboration between pupils and staff at special and mainstream schools.

3 Advancing Equality of Opportunity and Good Relations via Education

3.1 The Commission is mindful that any consideration of the role of the education system in maximising good relations must also take account of the important role of education in maximising equality of opportunity across the full range of equality grounds, including the need for a particular focus being on the steps required to assist those groups identified as being at particular disadvantage[3] to facilitate delivery of improved educational attainment for particular groups.

3.2 While this submission focuses on the importance of education in advancing good relations it also recognises that sharing in education, across the full range of equality grounds, not only has the potential to provide meaningful and sustainable relations between pupils of different cultures and backgrounds, but also has the potential to tackle inequality and improve educational outcomes for pupils from a diverse range of backgrounds and abilities.

3.3 As part of our ongoing work to highlight key inequalities, we have commissioned Queens University to undertake in-depth research into educational inequalities in Northern Ireland which we hope to publish early in 2015.

4 Inquiry into Shared Education and Integrated Education

4.1 The Equality Commission has long advocated support for a shared system of education in Northern Ireland. In the Commission's (November 2008) publication "Every Child an

---

[3] See Annex 2 for a summary of key findings from ECNI (2010) 'Inequalities in Education: Facts and Trends 1998-2008'. The Commission also notes 2014 research undertaken by the University of Ulster which highlights access and performance inequalities in post-primary education between grammar and secondary schools, between Catholic and Protestant Schools and for those on FSM; and which also highlights the potential for shared education to address a range of educational inequalities. (Borooah and Knox (2014) Access and Performance Inequalities: post primary education in Northern Ireland. Journal of Poverty and Social Justice - vol 22, no 2, 111–35).

Equal Child: An Equality Commission Statement on Key Inequalities in Education and a Strategy for Intervention"[4] the Commission noted that it was:

> *'hard to escape the conclusion that educating children of different backgrounds together has the potential to reduce the fears and tensions between communities that are founded on ignorance. It is equally difficult to avoid the conclusion that the long experience of separate educational provision has represented a lost opportunity for everyone in Northern Ireland.'*

4.2   In our February 2012 response[5] to the consultation on "Building A Better Future: Draft Programme For Government 2011-2015" we recognised *"the steps taken in terms of shared resources, including the schools estate and teachers, and shared programmes"* and endorsed:

> *"the development of a clear focus on shared education so as to maximise equality of opportunity and good relations, recognising that this will be facilitated through the teaching of a shared curriculum in shared classrooms".* [6]

4.3   The Commission remains of the view that the overall system of education provision in Northern Ireland has an important role to play, not only in the development of the child, but in advancing cohesion, sharing and integration across all equality grounds, with particular reference to promoting good relations. We have also made it clear that we are committed to using our full range of powers across equality and anti-discrimination statutes *'to ensure that all children and young people in Northern Ireland have the opportunity to flourish and succeed to the best of their abilities'*.[7]

4.4   The Commission considers that societal mixing and social cohesion is limited by separation in our education provision. It

---

[4]ECNI (2008): Every Child an Equal Child – An Equality Commission Statement on Key Inequalities in Education and a Strategy for Intervention, pages 5 and 6. Available at http://www.equalityni.org/archive/pdf/ECkeyinequalities.pdf
[5]ECNI (2012): Consultation response to the draft Programme for Government 2011-2015. Available at http://www.equalityni.org/archive/word/PfG_ECNIResponse_PfG220212.docx
[6] ECNI (2012): Consultation response to the draft Programme for Government 2011-2015, page 3. Available at http://www.equalityni.org/archive/word/PfG_ECNIResponse_PfG220212.docx
[7] ECNI (2008): Every Child an Equal Child – An Equality Commission Statement on Key Inequalities in Education and a Strategy for Intervention. Available at http://www.equalityni.org/archive/pdf/ECkeyinequalities.pdf

Equality Commission for Northern Ireland   Page | 5

is the Commission's view that a system of shared education has a central role to play in advancing a shared society and that children should have the opportunity to be educated together regardless of faith or background.

4.5 This is not to undermine the rights of parents to make choices regarding their child's attendance at specific schools, or for the provision of faith-based schools. However such considerations cannot overshadow the importance of a system of education seeking to maximise equality of opportunity and good relations. The Commission also recognises the important role that education can play in cultural development – providing immersion in literature, language, sport, activities, art, music etc.

4.6 It is for this reason that the Commission recommends a move towards a system of sharing across the full spectrum of education providers which teaches a diverse range of pupils together via a shared curriculum in shared classes. The Commission considers that sharing in education must impact meaningfully and substantively on every learner and we have highlighted the importance of sharing at all stages of educational provision – pre-school; early years; primary; post-primary; special needs; and tertiary levels.

4.7 <u>We set out below a number of further key points, aligned to the specific terms of reference of the Inquiry. As noted at the outset, we confine our response to those areas of the inquiry that are core to our remit, responsibilities and expertise</u>.

5 'the nature and definition of Shared Education and Integrated Education as it applies across all educational phases'

5.1 We draw attention again to our detailed advice to the Ministerial Advisory Group on Shared Education and earlier recommendations, which we summarise below.

5.2 In our November 2012 Submission[8] to the Ministerial Advisory Group on Advancing Shared Education we advocated:

---

[8] ECNI (2012) Submission to the Ministerial Advisory Group on Shared Education

> *"a move to a system of sharing across the full range of education providers at each level of provision; one which routinely teaches students together via a shared curriculum in shared classes.*
>
> *The Commission considers that such an approach could better provide children with shared awareness, understanding and experience of the value and range of diverse cultures, identities and backgrounds in Northern Ireland; while also enabling children from different cultures/communities to experience a shared society.*
>
> *The Commission considers that sharing in education must impact meaningfully and substantively on every child and that a shared experience should be central to the education system as a whole".*

5.3   The Commission also noted in that response that it considered that a shared system of education was aligned to the delivery and aims of a range of government strategies and programmes (for example, the Programme for Government; Good relations strategies; Every School a Good School etc) and maximising efficiencies in the school system and estate.

5.4   We specifically highlighted:

- The need to see improved equality of opportunity and educational outcomes across all equality grounds, in particular taking account of particular circumstances (e.g. Travellers; Protestant working class boys; children with disabilities and/or special educational needs; and those for whom English is an additional language etc).
- The need for advancement of sharing in education to maximise good relations across all relevant equality grounds, including community background.
- That a future based on cohesion, sharing and integration should seek to maximise sharing in a range of areas, including in education; and that we would expect to see Government investing in a shared educational experience as a route to increased social cohesion in society.
- The importance of sharing at each stage of educational provision – pre-school; early years; primary; post-primary; special needs and tertiary levels.

- The importance of sharing across the full range of education providers (ethos; identity or management / governance arrangements etc).
- That promoting equality and good relations within a school should complement school ethos and reinforce the importance of promoting equality and good relations in education.
- The importance of the rights of parents to choose individual schools (within appropriate economic constraints) - but in a context that does not impact on the development of a shared system as a whole.
- The potential to enhance existing mechanisms (e.g. the Entitlement Framework, Area Learning Partnerships, Area Based Planning; Common Funding Formula etc) using lessons learnt to date (such as from the Integrated Education Model and that emerging from the QUB Shared Education Programme), while providing appropriate mechanisms to incentivise and advance partnership working and shared delivery (e.g. via funding mechanisms etc).
- The importance of engaging with pupils, parents, education providers and wider stakeholders to communicate the rationale for the proposed system and model(s) - to improve associated policy proposals and to incentivise a move.
- The importance of agreeing and mainstreaming indicators to measure and review on sharing and collaboration in education provision and governance – both to acknowledge success and promote improvement.
- The importance of addressing wider issues linked to sharing in education – including academic selection at age 11; teacher training and the need for 'greater sharing and collaboration between teacher training colleges'; the teacher's exception under FETO; and better understanding the reasons for, and impacts of, any differential patterns of enrolment to education providers.

'a)   consideration of the need for a formal statutory definition'

5.5   We note that there is no agreed definition of shared education in Northern Ireland and note the concerns raised by some stakeholders around the absence of a definition e.g. that the language of 'shared education' has introduced ambiguity in

terms of what this aims to achieve in practice. For example, a 2013 report by Hansson et al[9], noted that *'for policy implementation to be effective a much clearer distinction between 'integrated', 'mixed', and 'shared' schooling needs to be drawn'*[10].

5.6   We note that the terms of reference, which was provided by the Department of Education to the Ministerial Advisory Group on the Advancement of Shared Education, asked them to adopt the following broad definition of shared education:

> *"**Shared education** involves two or more schools or other educational institutions from different sectors working in collaboration with the aim of delivering educational benefits to learners, promoting equality of opportunity, good relations, equality of identity, respect for diversity and community cohesion."*

5.7   We also note the May 2014 High Court decision by Judge Treacy (the 'Drumragh' judgment[11]) where he considered that, upon analysis, "**integrated education**" was a standalone concept; and that the type of education that is to be supported is *"integration between Protestant and Catholic Pupils as opposed to integration within school of any other distinct sets of pupils. The provision plainly envisages education together at the same school";* and that integrated education was *"education that is integrated throughout and not education that is delivered by a partisan board"*;

5.8   We also note the 'continuum' arguments that have been advanced regarding the potential inter-relationship between shared and integrated education. DENI, for example, have advised *'Sharing across schools is at different levels along a continuum, and integrated education should be at the upper end of that continuum'*[12]. Knox[13] has also set out the

---

[9] Hansson, O'Connor and McCord (2013): *Integrated Education – A review of policy and research evidence, (Children and Youth Programme*, UNESCO, University of Ulster). Available at http://cain.ulst.ac.uk/issues/education/docs/ief_2013_report_unesco.pdf

[10] Ibid, page 3

[11] http://www.courtsni.gov.uk/en-GB/Judicial%20Decisions/SummaryJudgments/Documents/Court%20Delivers%20Ruling%20on%20Department%20of%20Education's%20Approach%20to%20Long%20Term%20Planning/j_j_Summary%20of%20judgment%20-%20In%20re%20Drumragh%20Integrated%20College%2015%20May%202014.htm

[12] Hansard (2014): *Inquiry into Shared and Integrated Education Inquiry – DENI Briefing,* Available at http://www.niassembly.gov.uk/Assembly-Business/Official-Report/Committee-Minutes-of-Evidence/Session-2013-2014/July-2014/Inquiry-into-Integrated-and-Shared-Education-Department-of-Education-Briefing/

consideration that *'shared education' can be seen as part of 'a graduated journey towards greater inter-dependence between schools'* and that "*there are opportunities for schools here depending on where they are now, where they want to take this and the extent to which they want to broker interdependencies with other schools*'.

5.9   In the context of current debates now comprising discussions regarding discrete concepts of 'integrated' and 'shared' education, **the Commission recommends** that a clear definition of 'shared' education is set out, supported by clarity on the inter-relationship between 'shared' education and 'integrated' education[14]; and how they will collectively interact to achieve overarching policy goals (including the promotion of equality of opportunity and good relations).

Developing a Definition of Shared Education

5.10   In so far as it may assist with the development of a definition, we set out the following points for consideration:

5.11   While it is neither the Commission's intent nor remit to advocate a specific model or models of education, we have set out the broad equality and good relations goals that we would expect a system to deliver.

5.12   Reflecting our advice to the Ministerial Advisory Group, we recommend that sharing in education must:

- Ensure that sharing impacts meaningfully and substantively on every learner
- Ensure that a shared experience should be central to the education system as a whole, encompassing at all stages of educational provision – pre-school; early years; primary; post-primary; special needs; and tertiary levels.
- routinely teach learners together via a shared curriculum in shared classes.

---

[13] Hansard (June 2014): *Sharing in Education and Shared Education Programmes: International Fund for Ireland, Education and Training Inspectorate and University of Ulster.* Available at http://www.niassembly.gov.uk/Assembly-Business/Official-Report/Committee-Minutes-of-Evidence/Session-2013-2014/June-2014/Sharing-in-Education-and-Shared-Education-Programmes-International-Fund-for-Ireland-ETI-and-UU/

[14] We note the definition of integrated education contained in The Education Reform (Northern Ireland) Order 1989, with the interpretation as confirmed in the 'Drumragh Judgement

- better provide learners with shared awareness, understanding and experience of the value and range of diverse cultures, identities and backgrounds in Northern Ireland; while also enabling learners from different cultures/communities to experience a shared society.

5.13　We consider the above to be relevant to the development of policy aims associated with 'sharing' in education, and thus **we recommend** that it is taken into account in the development of a definition of 'shared education' that would seek to advance those aims.

5.14　**We further recommend** that any definition providing for a continuum of sharing also ensures that sharing is central to the system of education as a whole and that sharing impacts meaningfully and substantively on every learner.

5.15　With regards to the *aims* set out in the definition of shared education supplied to the Ministerial Advisor Group (*"promoting equality of opportunity, good relations, equality of identity, respect for diversity and community cohesion"*) we consider that the good relations relevant aims in any definition should mirror the language used in other relevant definitions so as to promote consistency across policy goals.

5.16　However, in the absence of an agreed definition of good relations, we would highlight the following concepts for consideration alongside the above:

- In work further to the T:BUC strategy, the Commission has highlighted the importance of ensuring *"a high level of dignity, respect and mutual understanding"* as well as the importance of ensuring *"an absence of prejudice, hatred, hostility or harassment"*[15]
- The Equality Act 2010 highlighted the need to *"tackle prejudice, and promote understanding"*[16].

---

[15] Evidence to the Assembly Committee for the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister. Inquiry into Building a United Community, October 2014.
[16] Equality Act 2010, section 149 (5)

'b) An obligation in statute to facilitate and encourage Shared Education'

5.17   We note that Article 64(1) of the Education Reform (NI) Order 1989 ("the 1989 Order") provides a duty on the Department of Education to *"encourage and facilitate the development of integrated education, that is to say the education together at school of Protestant and Roman Catholic pupils"*.

5.18   As noted earlier, the May 2014 'Drumragh' judgment set out that "integrated education" was a standalone concept, and did not extend to what is currently being referred to as shared education.

5.19   The **Commission considers** that 'Shared Education', once appropriately defined, and its inter-relationship with 'integrated education' made clear, is likely to benefit from an appropriate obligation in statute, supplementing but not replacing the existing Article 64 obligation on integrated education.

6   'Key barriers and enablers for Shared Education and Integrated Education'

Barriers

Separateness in the Northern Ireland Education System

6.1   In Northern Ireland, the majority of children are educated separately with little opportunity to mix with children from a diverse range of backgrounds.   Recent research[17] supports that post-primary provision in Northern Ireland remains mainly one of separate provision. As highlighted by Borooah and Knox, Department Statistics from 2013/14[18] show that:

 ▪ In the primary sector: 6.2% of Catholics attend controlled primary schools; 1% of Protestants attend maintained primary schools; and 5.7% of primary school children attend integrated schools.
 ▪ In the secondary (non-grammar) sector: 2.8% of Catholics attend controlled secondary schools; 1% of Protestants

---

[17] Borooah and Knox (Nov 2012) Delivering Shared Education: Knowledge Exchange Seminar
[18] Borooah and Knox (October 2014): Briefing to the Education Committee

Equality Commission for Northern Ireland   Page | 12

attend maintained secondary schools; and 14.9% of secondary (non-grammar) pupils attend integrated schools.
- In the secondary (grammar) sector: 8.3% of Catholics attend controlled grammar schools; and 0.9% of Protestants attend voluntary Catholic grammar schools
- Overall, 6.7% of primary and post primary pupils attend integrated schools.

6.2   While all publicly funded schools are technically open to pupils from any background, the general pattern of school enrolment is not one of diversity and while integrated schools *'represent a highly significant and distinctive approach to integrated education....only the minority of the school population attend them'*[19]. Tertiary education, where formal separation is not a feature, may thus be the first place for many students in which informal mixing occurs among people from a diverse range of equality backgrounds[20].

6.3   As the general pattern of school enrolment is not one of diversity, work to understand the reasons for, and impacts of, differential patterns of enrolment to education providers may therefore in itself suggest factors of relevance in the development of a more shared system of education in Northern Ireland.

Barriers impacting on Shared Education

6.4   A number of research reports and evaluations have highlighted the barriers to shared education across providers. For example, practical challenges to school collaboration include matters such as timetabling, transport and curriculum planning[21]. Some schools have also experienced challenges around the presentation of their cultural ethos or in relation to discipline policies.

6.5   Research by ARK[22] in 2013 on Shared Education has highlighted concerns from Children and Young People including

---

[19] Bain (2006): Schools for the future – funding strategy and sharing, para.13.11, page 179. Available at http://www.deni.gov.uk/review_of_education.pdf
[20] Hamilton, Hanson, Bell and Toucas (2008) Segregated lives: Social Division, Sectarianism and everyday life in Northern Ireland. Available at http://www.conflictresearch.org.uk/950B59D2-CE1A-4AEB-8F79-E8CF9CC61C2A/FinalDownload/DownloadId-9B96BC7D0BD0D77E405CD06536A6CAEE/950B59D2-CE1A-4AEB-8F79-E8CF9CC61C2A/Resources/Documents/P2_%20-%20Segregated%20Lives.pdf
[21] Ministerial Advisory Group for the Advancement of Shared Education (May 2013). Report
[22] ARK (2013): Shared Education - Views from Children and Young People

concerns around being bullied; having to mix with children from a different religious background; and concerns about pupils from grammar and non-grammar schools engaging in shared activities and classes. NICCY research (2013)[23] also found that whilst many pupils recognised the value of shared education for some their experiences had been a *"shared but separate experience…"*.

6.6   A 2013 evaluation by the Education and Training Inspectorate[24] of the International Fund for Ireland's Sharing in Education Programme has also stated that there are challenges in sustaining and embedding learning on shared education. These include insufficient funding for collaboration, and for CPD; the perception from within schools around competing priorities and initiatives from DE; and changes in staffing arrangements and the loss of staff. The Commission's response to the Ministerial Advisory Group also noted that, based on available research, there also appeared reticence to collaborate across school management types and even greater reluctance to collaborate with schools that have a different approach to academic selection. The ETI evaluation concluded that *'much remains to be done to ensure the experience is effective, sustained and progressive, particularly in schools that have not yet begun the process'*[25].

6.7   The Commission **recommends** that the Department utilises lessons drawn from the body of research[26] regarding sharing in education – including that relating to Integrated Education Model and the QUB Shared Education Programme[27] to overcome already identified barriers.

---

[23] NICCY (2013) Shared Education: The Views of Children and Young People 2013
[24] ETI (2013): A final evaluation of the International Fund for Ireland's Sharing in Education Programme. Available at http://www.etini.gov.uk/international-fund-for-irelands-sharing-in-education-programme/a-final-evaluation-of-the-international-fund-for-irelands-sharing-in-education-programme.htm
[25] Ibid, page 33
[26] Our 201 Submission to the Ministerial Advisory Group on Shared Education summarises a range of research regarding integrated education and the QUB Shared Education Programme.
[27] The SEP encourages schools to make cross-sectoral collaborations an integral part of school life, creating enhanced educational and personal development opportunities for everyone involved.
The SEP has, since 2007, involved over 100 schools at Post-Primary and Primary level in cross-sectoral collaboration concentrating on substantive, curriculum based activities. In the year beginning Sep 2010, SEP2 partnerships involved over 4,000 students across Northern Ireland. See http://www.schoolsworkingtogether.co.uk/

Equality Commission for Northern Ireland   Page | 14

<u>Barriers impacting on Integrated Education</u>

6.8   While only a minority of children attend integrated schools, the integrated sector has raised a number of key concerns in relation to the Departments approach to encouraging and facilitating integrated education including a perceived failure to take into account parental demand for integrated schooling[28] (as evidenced by opinion polls) or to actively seek opportunities to increase the number of integrated schools places.

6.9   A 2013 report by Hansson et al, commissioned by the IEF[29], has highlighted how *'key policy documents now no longer make explicit reference to integrated education despite the statutory duty to support and facilitate it'*.

6.10   Representatives of the integrated sector have also raised concerns that *'public support for integrated education remains extremely high, but education policies are based on maintaining separate schools'*[30]. For example IEF has raised concerns around the area based planning process and have criticised proposals to establish a single Education and Library Board as *'copper-fastened segregation'*[31].

6.11   The Commission also notes the judgement of Mr Justice Treacy in the 'Drumragh' judicial review which highlighted that *'using an analytical tool to plan for an area is both flexible and necessary however, the inflexibility of the projections used [in relation to area based planning] will have the effect of making it difficult to accommodate the section 64 duty in future day to day decisions. The Department need to be alive to the Article 64 duty at all levels'*[32].

6.12   We **highlight** the importance of ensuring fulfilment of the Article 64 provisions of the Education Reform (Northern Ireland) Order 1989 to 'encourage and facilitate' integrated education at

---

[28] However, as the Committee will be aware, in recent evidence to the Committee the University of Ulster stated that that the number of school places in the integrated sector "slightly exceeds demand", leaving "about 2000" places unfilled, although there are pressures in particular areas due to parental preference.
[29] Hansson, Bones and McCord (2013): *Integrated Education – a Review of Policy and Research Evidence.* (University of Ulster for Integrated Education Fund)
[30] ETI (2013): A final evaluation of the International Fund for Ireland's Sharing in Education Programme. Available at http://www.etini.gov.uk/international-fund-for-irelands-sharing-in-education-programme/a-final-evaluation-of-the-international-fund-for-irelands-sharing-in-education-programme.htm
[31] IEF (2014): Streamlining should mean eliminating division: the latest education plans reinforce it.
[32] **Drumragh** Integrated College's Application for a Judicial Review [2014] NIQB 69.

all levels; and again **recommend** using lessons drawn from the body of research on integrated education to overcome already identified barriers.

Barriers in wider educational policy

6.13 In 2010 the Commission jointly published a challenge paper entitled *"Ensuring the Good Relations Work in our Schools Counts - A Strategy to meet our needs for the 21st Century."* [33] The paper also included, inter alia[34], a number of wider recommendations to progress sharing and good relations in education, including:

- continued concern about the system of academic selection at eleven years old;
- that all teachers should be able to enjoy the same legislative protection as other workers and the exemption in FETO should be abolished at secondary level, as previously recommended, with early consideration given to urging the removal of the exemption at all levels; and
- the need for 'greater sharing and collaboration between teacher training colleges'[35].

6.14 We again highlight the need to address wider issues linked to sharing in education - including academic selection at age 11; teacher training; and the teachers exemption under FETO.

Academic Selection

6.15 School collaboration is set in the context of the wider political debate on education. There is currently no agreement on academic selection with 2009/10 having seen the introduction of unregulated tests in which some 7,000 primary school pupils took part in exams set by the Association for Quality Education (largely Protestant students) and 6,700 children sat the GL assessment tests (largely Catholic students)[36].

---

[33] The Good Relations Forum (2010): Ensuring the Good Relations Work in our Schools Counts – A Strategy to meet our needs for the 21st century. Available at
http://www.equalityni.org/ECNI/media/ECNI/Publications/Delivering%20Equality/EnsuringGoodRelationsWorkinourSchoolsCountsApr2010.pdf
[34] A wider summary of relevant recommendations can be seen in Annex 3.
[35] Ibid, page 17
[36] Knox (2010) *Sharing Education Programme – Views from the White Board,* page 12. Available at
http://www.schoolsworkingtogether.co.uk/documents/Views%20from%20the%20White%20Board%20May%202010.pdf

Equality Commission for Northern Ireland   Page | 16

6.16   The Commission reiterates our continued concern about the system of academic selection at eleven years old.

Teacher Training and Employment

6.17   In 2003, the Commission funded research by QUB which concluded that:

> *'A significant barrier, identified by teachers, to their wider professional development in these areas was the relative lack of opportunity to teach or work outside their own community background. Aligned with this, was a concern about the unequal access for employment across the Controlled and Maintained school sectors for all teachers.*[37]

6.18   This issue is inextricably linked with the maintenance of the teacher's exception within the Fair Employment and Treatment Order (FETO). In 2004[38], the Commission undertook a formal investigation and called for the removal of the teacher's exception from posts in secondary level education. In 2008, the Commission reiterated this position and further called for *early consideration to be given to the question of urging the removal of the exemption at all levels".*

6.19   In our 2013 response to the Review of the initial teacher education infrastructure in Northern Ireland, we noted *"we consider that sharing in education must impact meaningfully and substantively on every participant and at all stages of educational provision – including tertiary levels. The Commission is mindful that, in 2013, teacher training in Northern Ireland represents the sole segregated area in the provision of third-level education in Northern Ireland."*

6.20   The Commission remains concerned about the impact that the separate provision of teacher training has on job opportunities, professional development and the promotion of good relations; and considers that closer collaboration between all initial teacher training providers in Northern Ireland would have a range of benefits, including in relation to good relations.

6.21   There is a compelling need for placing equality of opportunity and good relations at the heart of education structures.

---

[37] Equality Awareness in Teacher Education and Training in Northern Ireland 2003 QUB
[38] Formal investigation under Art 41 (FETO) on the Teachers Exception (2004)

Improvements to teacher education are an essential part of moving to the Commission's vision of a society where all children and young people are valued equally and allowed the opportunity to develop to their full potential.

6.22   We also consider that teachers should be equipped with a curriculum, resources and skills to deal with contentious issues in the classroom and note the evidence already given to the Inquiry that *'Developments on teacher training and teacher development will ultimately lead to the embedding of shared education as a concept in the mainstream education system'*[39].

6.23   We reiterate our **recommendation** that the exemption in FETO should be abolished at secondary level, as previously recommended, with early consideration given to urging the removal of the exemption at all levels; for greater sharing and collaboration between teacher training colleges; and for teachers to have the support and training to embed shared education in the classroom.

Alignment of Government Policies

6.24   Academics from Queens University have highlighted the need for greater alignment in relation to policies on education and on good relations. For example, the University of Ulster recently highlighted[40]:

> *"We have the review of the Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI), area planning, the Education and Skills Authority (ESA), the common funding formula, school closures, shared education and the 'Together: Building a United Community' document. To us, there does not seem to be any real alignment between some of those areas. They almost seem to be undertaken as separate processes, yet there is an interrelationship between some of them"*

6.25   The Commission **recommends** that action is taken to ensure coordination across relevant policies and programmes so as to facilitate and encourage shared and integrated education.

---

[39] Hansard (2014): *Evidence to the Education Committee - Sharing in Education and Shared Education Programmes: International Fund for Ireland, Education and Training Inspectorate and University of Ulster*
[40] See http://www.niassembly.gov.uk/Assembly-Business/Official-Report/Committee-Minutes-of-Evidence/Session-2013-2014/January-2014/Area-based-Planning-Queens-University-Belfast-and-University-of-Ulster/

Enablers

6.26   We welcome the indication in T:BUC Strategy that the key aim relating to education is *'to enhance the quality and extent of shared education provision, thus ensuring that sharing in education becomes a central part of every child's educational experience'*[41] and the commitment to pilot 100 shared schools by 2015.

6.27   The Commission considers that there are clear opportunities to build upon / extend existing education policy and **recommends** that consideration is given to how this might be achieved.

6.28   Research[42], for example, has pointed to the possibility of *'incentivising Area Learning Communities to deliver the entitlement framework on a cross community basis; incentivising the delivery as part of the core curriculum; promoting the reconciliation benefits as having wider societal value; and argue for the economic benefits when set alongside the costs of separate denominational provision'*[43].

Area Learning Partnerships / Communities

6.29   Research in 2008[44] showed that collaboration through the Area Learning Partnerships offered many benefits such as the opportunity to share expertise amongst teaching staff; a wider range of curricular opportunities for young people and the opportunity to break down barriers and build informal relationships, particularly between grammar and secondary schools.

6.30   Despite this generally positive assessment of collaboration *'participants indicated that sustainable collaborative relationships were difficult to establish and a range of factors were reported to have an impact on the process of school collaboration'*.[45]   Of relevance is that schools were more hesitant about establishing collaborative links outside of their

---

[41] Together Building a United Community (May 2013), page 29. Available at
http://www.ofmdfmni.gov.uk/together-building-a-united-community-strategy.pdf
[42] Bain (2006): Schools for the future – funding strategy and sharing. Available at
http://www.deni.gov.uk/review_of_education.pdf
[43] Knox (2010) Sharing Education Programme – Views from the Whiteboard, page 55. Available
http://www.schoolsworkingtogether.co.uk/documents/Views%20from%20the%20White%20Board%20
May%202010.pdf
[44] Queens University School of Education (2008) *School Collaboration in Northern Ireland –
Opportunities for Reconciliation*, page 5. Available at
http://www.schoolsworkingtogether.co.uk/documents/School-Collaboration-in-NI.pdf
[45] Ibid, page 5

sector than those within it (only 35% of schools suggested that they had established collaborative links with a school which took a different approach to academic selection) or between State maintained and Catholic Controlled; or integrated and non-integrated schools. The research also suggested that schools placed *'considerable emphasis on cultural issues and sought to establish collaborative relations with schools where the culture was deemed to be compatible with their own'*[46]. Further, Borooah and Knox note, in their submission to the Inquiry into Shared and Integrated Education[47], that '*it is claimed that ALCs are putting in place shared education. There is no evidence to support this assertion. DE claims that they do not gather evidence on the extent of sharing in ALCs, their impact on educational outcomes, and the value for money of these collaborative arrangements*'.

6.31 **The Commission recommends** that consideration is given to how best Area Learning Partnerships/Communities might effectively encourage sharing between providers from different sectors / management types etc in a way which could serve to advance good relations.

Sustainability and Funding

6.32 Those involved in shared education have highlighted the importance of funding in sustaining collaborative partnerships. As highlighted in evidence to the Committee recently, '*the uncertainty which exists around funding for the entitlement framework is unhelpful - senior Leaders and Governors need clear direction and information relating to funding which is required to sustain our collaborative arrangements*[48]'.

6.33 An evaluation by the ETI of the Sharing in Education Programme highlighted that while the programme promoted effectively links between schools in shared education partnerships, '*the extent of the sustainability of these partnerships without additional funding remains to be seen*[49].

---

[46] Ibid, page 5

[47] See http://www.niassembly.gov.uk/globalassets/documents/education-2011---2016/inquiries-and-reviews/shared-and-integrated-education/knox-and-borooah-2.pdf

[48] Written evidence to the Shared and Integrated Education Inquiry from both Ballycastle High School and Cross and Passion College

[49] Education and Training Inspectorate (2013): *An evaluation of the International Fund for Ireland's Sharing in Education Programme*, page 32.

Equality Commission for Northern Ireland   Page | 20

6.34   Further, where viability criteria put local education provision at risk, sharing between and/or merging existing schools, may both advance good relations and help ensure that a school provides an anchor point for the wider community as envisaged in the Extended Schools Initiative.[50]

6.35   We understand that the Common Funding Formula Review is still under consideration.   Our response to the Ministerial Advisory Group noted that Common Funding Formula

"along with area based planning creates further room for 'creative thinking' in relation to directing funds so as to reward sharing between schools (of different management type etc) in a way that would advance Good Relations".

6.36   Our 2014 response[51] to the review of the funding formula for schools noted

"The Commissions vision is to create an education system where children are routinely educated together, in inclusive environments, regardless of their background or ability.[52] It will be important that the common funding formula is able to take account of the outcomes of the above considerations"

"Any funding mechanism can have a transformative effect on an education system and this is a clear opportunity to incentivise increased sharing of educational resources on cross-sectoral and ability lines".

6.37   We are aware that while the Ministerial advisory group recommended[53] a shared education premium within the common funding formula, the Minister has reserved his position

---

[50] Education and Training Inspectorate Report (2006). Available at http://www.etini.gov.uk/the-extended-schools-initiative-in-northern-ireland-a-baseline-survey-by-the-education-and-training-inspectorate.pdf
[51]
http://www.equalityni.org/ECNI/media/ECNI/Consultation%20Responses/2012/DEdCommonFundingFormula-2012.pdf
[52] Every Child an Equal Child(2008) see also Ensuring the good relations work in our schools counts (2010)

[53] Recommendation 3 of the MAG Group report states that "As part of the proposed revised common funding formula ... a 'shared education premium' should be incorporated into the funding formula for schools and other educational institutions. This premium would recognize the added value of shared education and should be weighted in terms of: The number of children and young people that are engaged in shared education activities, as defined in this report; and the proportion of school time that children and young people are engaged in such activities."

on whether that is the most appropriate way to fund shared education[54].

6.38 The **Commission recommends** that consideration is given as to how best to incentivise increased sharing of educational resources on cross-sectoral and ability lines, including via the common funding formula.

School Level Enablers

6.39 As highlighted by the Commission in its 2012 submission to the Ministerial Advisory Group, school leadership and school ethos will be important drivers in future collaborative work as well as the schools relationship with the local community. The overall goal will be to create a system of shared education and collaboration which is curriculum- focused; has a shared educational experience at its core and is integral to the way all education is delivered in Northern Ireland.

6.40 A number of research reports have highlighted key school level enablers in advancing shared education including the importance of high-quality contact; school leadership links between teachers; a focus on the curriculum and the sharing of resources between teachers.

6.41 The report of the Ministerial Advisory Group [55] highlights that *"Research evidence from a range of studies carried out in Northern Ireland over the years … suggests that limited contact resulting from bringing children together for short periods of time – either in school or elsewhere – has little or no long-term effects on their attitudes"* and notes *"support for longer term-sustained contact between learners"* (aligned to inter-group contact theory - Hewstone et al. 2005; Hughes et al. 2007[56]), summarising that *"'the contact literature makes a clear distinction between superficial and intimate contact in respect*

---

[54] NI Assembly (Hansard – 2nd July 2014): Inquiry into Integrated a Shared Education – Department of Education Briefing.
[55] Connolly, P., Purvis, D., O'Grady, P.J., (2013) Advancing Shared Education: Report of the Ministerial Advisory Group pp49-50
[56] Hewstone, M., Cairns, E., Voci, A., Paolini, S., McLernon, F., Crisp, R. et al. (2005) Intergroup contact in a divided society: Challenging segregation in Northern Ireland, in: D. Abrams, J. M. Marques, and M. A. Hogg (Eds) The social psychology of inclusion and exclusion, pp. 265–292 Philadelphia, PA: Psychology Press.
Hughes, J. and Donnelly, C. (2007) Integrated schools in Northern Ireland and bi-lingual/bi-national schools in Israel: Some policy issues. In Z. Bekermann and C. McGlynn (Eds) Sustained peace education in post-conflict societies, pp. 121–134. London: McMillan.

of positive outcomes. The latter refers to encounters where individuals have a more positive emotional disposition towards others and trust them enough to "self-disclose", thereby creating an opportunity for perspective-taking and out-group empathy' (Hughes and Donnelly, 2012: p. 191). 2010)".

6.42   Research has also highlighted the importance of local solutions to cross-sectoral working; the need for shared education to enhance the delivery of core curricular activities or meet real educational need (e.g. increased access to specialist teaching).

6.43   Factors such as geographical proximity, levels of cross community integration and interface areas have also been highlighted as important all factors in the workability of Shared Education Programmes[57]. ETI have also noted[58] that a key challenge remains *"to engage schools/ organisations not already involved in community relations work"*.

6.44   We **reiterate our recommendation** that the Department utilises lessons from the body of research[59] regarding sharing in education – including that relating to Integrated Education Model and the QUB Shared Education Programme[60] etc.

<u>Guidance</u>

6.45   The Commission recognises the importance of guidance for schools who wish to embark on shared education and for those who wish to move toward greater interdependency.

6.46   Both the Ministerial Advisory Group on shared education and academics from Queens University have stated that there is a lack of guidance for schools who wish collaborate to sustain a federation, a confederation or shared communities of

---

[57] Knox (2014):
[58] ETI (2013) A Final Evaluation of the International Fund for Ireland's Sharing in Education Programme http://www.etini.gov.uk/international-fund-for-irelands-sharing-in-education-programme/a-final-evaluation-of-the-international-fund-for-irelands-sharing-in-education-programme.htm
[59] The Commission's 2012 Submission to the Ministerial Advisory Group on Shared Education summarises a range of research regarding integrated education and the QUB Shared Education Programme.
[60] The SEP encourages schools to make cross-sectoral collaborations an integral part of school life, creating enhanced educational and personal development opportunities for everyone involved. The SEP has, since 2007, involved over 100 schools at Post-Primary and Primary level in cross-sectoral collaboration concentrating on substantive, curriculum based activities. In the year beginning Sep 2010, SEP2 partnerships involved over 4,000 students across Northern Ireland. See http://www.schoolsworkingtogether.co.uk/

Equality Commission for Northern Ireland   Page | 23

learning[61]. Queens University highlighted that '*even where the post-primary area-based plans have suggested that x number of schools should work together in a certain town for the betterment of education outcomes for all the pupils…. there is no real assistance or support for them to do that, be it actual resource or even just advice and guidance about how they would grow that particular partnership*'[62].

6.47   We welcome the work being undertaken by the Department to provide guidance on the different models of shared education. ETI has also highlighted that '*in helping to address these challenges DE officials need to work more collaboratively to ensure that school improvement policies signpost connections to, and opportunities for, shared education*'[63].

Indicators and Evaluation

6.48   In order to acknowledge success and promote improvement, sharing and collaboration between schools should be evaluated. Bain (2006)[64] recommends that all models of sharing and collaboration, from the locally evolving partnerships to the more formally structured arrangements of sharing and collaboration, can be evaluated against a set of indicators[65].

6.49   Evaluation of existing barriers and enablers to a shared system of education will be important. Focus will need to be placed on lessons learned to date – for example the reported difficulties encountered by teachers in teaching in shared classes, or the reported anxiety of some pupils about participating in the Shared Education Programme.

6.50   Over time, the relative effectiveness of different types of partnerships and activities will need to be evaluated, including establishing what type of collaboration is most effective in

---

[61] Hansard (2014): Area Based Planning - Queens University and the University of Ulster. Available at http://www.niassembly.gov.uk/Assembly-Business/Official-Report/Committee-Minutes-of-Evidence/Session-2013-2014/January-2014/Area-based-Planning-Queens-University-Belfast-and-University-of-Ulster/
[62] Ibid
[63] Education and Training Inspectorate (2013): *An evaluation of the International Fund for Ireland's Sharing in Education Programme*, page 32.
[64] Bain (2006): Schools for the future – funding strategy and sharing. Available at http://www.deni.gov.uk/review_of_education.pdf
[65] Ibid, page 170 - Bain recommended indicators covering: quality and effectiveness of provision; equality and accessibility; diversity and choice; community well being and cohesion; economy and efficiency (including matching provision to need and reducing overprovision); and cross-community and cross-sector sharing and collaboration. Source:

delivering good educational outcomes and experiences as well as promoting good relations.

6.51 Evaluation should be through both self-evaluation and through inspection and should take account of both the distinctive character of the school and the community environment. Systems of measurement and rolling evaluation of policies/programmes will be important. Involvement of the Education and Training Inspectorate would likely provide an effective means to mainstream this process.

6.52 The Commission **continues to recommend** indicators to measure and review sharing and collaboration in education provision and governance – both to acknowledge success and promote improvement. The Commission therefore recognises the potential for the indicators being developed by the Education and Training Inspectorate, on behalf of the Department for Education, to assist schools in evaluating programs of shared education and inform future guidance in this area.

6.53 The Commission is also of the view that there is a real opportunity to progress and mainstream learning from the sharing in education and shared education programs through such projects as the recently agreed Delivering Social Change (DSC) signature project. Data should be collected on the educational impacts on Section 75 Groups and children on FSM as part of the DSC and other programmes.

Areas of Specific Interest to the Inquiry

6.54 Aligned to the specific terms of reference to the inquiry, we also make the following comments:

The effectiveness of the relevant parts of the CRED policy

6.55 Aligned to our remit and expertise, the Commission has not undertaken a detailed consideration of the effectiveness of the CRED policy

6.56 The Commission however recognises the crucial role that schools have in contributing to the reconciliation of our society. This is not solely a job for schools, but schools do play a critical

role[66]. The current policy environment provides a further opportunity to address persistent inequalities in education and make a substantial contribution to improved social and community cohesion within our society.

6.57   We note that the Department's Community Relations, Equality and Diversity (CRED) policy commits to *"encourage greater sharing and collaboration across and between all educational settings on a cross community basis"*[67]. We **welcome** that the intended outcomes set out in CRED policy; namely *"to develop learners who understand and respect the rights, equality and diversity (including linguistic diversity) of all S75 groups"* have the potential to promote equality of opportunity and good relations across the full range of equality grounds.

6.58   We however note that the NIHRC has recommended[68] that *"there is therefore arguably a need to align curriculum content more carefully with CRED aspirations"* and that recommendation 10 of the Ministerial Advisory Group recommends *"an independent review should be undertaken of current practice... The review should consider the effectiveness of the current Community Relations Equality and Diversity (CRED) policy and also include consideration of the opportunities that are provided for children and young people to discuss and explore issues associated with divisions, conflict and inequalities in Northern Ireland."*

6.59   We also note the reply given by the Minster for Education[69] indicating that following the closure of the International Fund for Ireland's Sharing in Education Programme in December 2013, schools were encouraged to apply for CRED funding but that some schools did not apply and that in some Boards the Scheme was under-subscribed. We would **encourage** steps to maximise the effective use of the CRED policy and available funding to support the advancement of equality of opportunity and good relations via CRED and the school curriculum.

---

[66] The Good Relations Forum (2010): Ensuring the Good Relations Work in our Schools Counts (2010), page 11. Available at http://www.equalityni.org/archive/pdf/EnsuringGoodRelationsWorkinourSchoolsCounts.pdf

[67] Department of Education (2011): *Community Relations, Equality and Diversity in Education*, page 25. Available at http://soap.tibus.com/credni/filestore/documents/Final%20CRED%20Policy%20-%20March%202011%20-%20English%20PDF.PDF
[68] Education reform in Northern Ireland: A Human Rights Review, QUB, commissioned by NIHRC, 2013 www.nihrc.org.uk
[69] Assembly Question - AQW 30553/11-15

Engagement, including with parents and carers

6.60   The Commission reiterates the importance of engaging with pupils, parents, education providers and wider stakeholders to communicate the rationale for the proposed system and model(s) - to improve associated policy proposals and to incentivise any moves.

6.61   We recommend, in line with our consistent call for effective engagement with Section 75 groups, that the Department and other key bodies also take steps to ensure effective engagement with children & young people (C&YP) in the design, delivery, implementation and review of shared education initiatives. We note that a recent NICCY report[70] has revealed an absence of robust systems by Departments for recording, analysing, evaluating and providing feedback to C&YP on the outcomes of engagements.

6.62   Further NICCY research (2013)[71] into the views of C&YP on shared education has also reported that whilst many pupils recognised the value of shared education and its objectives, for some their experiences of sharing had been less positive; with some pupils indicating that the collaborative activities and joint classes had been a *"shared but separate experience…"*.

6.63   Gallagher and Duffy (2012) have also noted the importance of parental support and involvement in their analysis[72] of the Shared Education Programme (SEP):

> *"Some of the schools talked about cross-sector collaboration needing parental support and involvement. Those schools situated in contested space appeared to experience the most resistance from parents; perhaps due to concerns about safety moving through contested space or their children mixing with young people from the other side of the community. According to some Coordinators, parents were also dealing with the legacy of the conflict themselves."*

---

[70] NICCY (2014) 'Walking or Talking Participation - evidencing the impact of direct participation with children and young people in the development of departmental policies, strategies, legislation and services
[71] NICCY (2013) Shared Education: The Views of Children and Young People 2013
[72] Duffy, G., Gallagher, T., (2012) Sustaining Cross-Sector Collaboration: An examination of schools involved in the first cohort of the Sharing Education Programme - http://www.schoolsworkingtogether.com/documents/Sustainability%20Report.pdf

6.64 The recent evaluation of Sharing in Education Programmes, noted that when projects involved parents/carers, it lead to a more enriched experience for participants. The Commission has also noted that sharing between and/or merging existing schools, may both advance good relations and help ensure that a school provides an anchor point for the wider community as envisaged in the Extended Schools Initiative.[73]

6.65 As highlighted in our response to the Ministerial Advisory Group - without unduly delaying progress, there will be merits in looking at lessons learnt from the Integrated sector; the Sharing in Education and Shared Education Programmes; and other similar initiatives to identify key lessons regarding engagement.

The Role of Special Schools

6.66 Aligned to the terms for reference for the inquiry, we reiterate our view that sharing in education, across the full range of equality grounds, not only has the potential to provide meaningful and sustainable relations between pupils of different cultures and backgrounds, but also has the potential to improve educational outcomes for pupils from a diverse range of backgrounds and abilities.

6.67 We consider that sharing in education must impact meaningfully and substantively on every participant and we have highlighted the importance of sharing at all stages of educational provision – pre-school; early years; primary; post-primary; special needs; and tertiary levels."

6.68 We note that the Ministerial Advisory Group report quotes the ETI as reporting *"Other key benefits included improved social and personal skills for all learners; children from mainstream schools developing a better understanding of those with SEN and the transmission of special education staff expertise to their mainstream colleagues."*

6.69 The Commission supports action that encourages routine sharing and collaboration between pupils and staff at special and mainstream schools, or actions which promote positive attitudes and challenge negative stereotypes.

---

[73] Education and Training Inspectorate Report (2006). Available at http://www.etini.gov.uk/the-extended-schools-initiative-in-northern-ireland-a-baseline-survey-by-the-education-and-training-inspectorate.pdf

6.70   We **recommend** the Department explore how a shared experience can be central to the education system as a whole, encompassing at all stages of educational provision – including **routine sharing and collaboration between pupils and staff at special and mainstream schools**.

7   'Alternative approaches and models of good practice in other jurisdictions in terms of policy interventions and programmes'

7.1   Aligned to our remit and expertise, the Commission has not undertaken work to evaluate education policy interventions from other jurisdictions.

7.2   This submission, and the further detail set out in our submission to the Ministerial Advisory Group in 2012, has however sought to point to and reference a range of literature and research regarding lessons to date from the Northern Ireland experience.

8   'Priorities and actions to be taken to improve sharing and integration'

8.1   The Commission recognises the potential for shared education to tackle inequality and promote equality of opportunity and good relations across the full range of Section 75 groups

8.2   We consider that any priority actions to advance shared education should be aligned to achieving these goals.

8.3   We summarise below the key recommendations developed across this paper.

A Legal and Policy framework

8.4   T**he Commission recommends** that a clear definition of 'shared' education is set out, supported by clarity on the inter-relationship between 'shared' education and 'integrated'

education[74]; and how they will collectively interact to achieve overarching policy goals (including the promotion of equality of opportunity and good relations).

8.5 Reflecting our advice to the Ministerial Advisory Group, we recommend that sharing in education must:

- Ensure that sharing impacts meaningfully and substantively on every learner
- Ensure that a shared experience should be central to the education system as a whole, encompassing at all stages of educational provision – pre-school; early years; primary; post-primary; special needs; and tertiary levels.
- routinely teach learners together via a shared curriculum in shared classes.
- better provide learners with shared awareness, understanding and experience of the value and range of diverse cultures, identities and backgrounds in Northern Ireland; while also enabling learners from different cultures/communities to experience a shared society.

8.6 We consider the above to be relevant to the development of policy aims associated with 'sharing' in education, and thus **we recommend** that it is taken into account in the development of a definition of 'shared education' that would seek to advance those aims. W**e recommend** that any definition providing for a continuum of sharing ensures that sharing is central to the system of education as a whole and that it impacts meaningfully and substantively on every learner.

8.7 We consider that that the allocation of responsibility for mainstreaming shared education needs to be explicit, and therefore **consider** that 'Shared Education', once appropriately defined, and its inter-relationship with 'integrated education' made clear, is likely to benefit from an appropriate obligation in statute, supplementing but not replacing the existing Article 64 obligation on integrated education.

---

[74] We note the definition of integrated education contained in The Education Reform (Northern Ireland) Order 1989, with the interpretation as confirmed in the 'Drumragh Judgement'

Equality Commission for Northern Ireland   Page | 30

Addressing Barriers to the Advancement of Shared and Integrated Education

8.8   The Commission **recommends** that the Department utilises lessons drawn from the body of research[75] regarding sharing in education – including that relating to Integrated Education Model and the QUB Shared Education Programme[76] etc. We also **highlight** the importance of ensuring fulfilment of the Article 64 provisions of the Education Reform (Northern Ireland) Order 1989 to 'encourage and facilitate' integrated education at all levels.

8.9   With regards to barriers in wider education policy, we continue to **recommend** action to address wider issues linked to sharing in education (including academic selection at age 11; teacher training to advance shared education; the removal of the teachers' exemption under FETO; and to gain a better understanding of the reasons for, and impacts of, any differential patterns of enrolment to education providers).

8.10   The Commission remains of the view that, for shared education to be mainstreamed, it needs to be facilitated and promoted through the wider policy context. There is a need for a joined-up approach to sharing and alignment of the policies to promote and facilitate it. The Commission **recommends** that action is taken to ensure coordination across relevant policies and programmes.

Better Utilising Existing Enablers

8.11   The Commission continues to highlight the clear opportunities to build upon / extend existing education policy to be used to better advance shared education and **recommends** that consideration is given to how this might be achieved.

8.12   We **recommend** that consideration is given to how best Area Learning Partnerships / Communities might effectively

---

[75] Our 201 Submission to the Ministerial Advisory Group on Shared Education summarises a range of research regarding integrated education and the QUB Shared Education Programme.
[76] The SEP encourages schools to make cross-sectoral collaborations an integral part of school life, creating enhanced educational and personal development opportunities for everyone involved.
The SEP has, since 2007, involved over 100 schools at Post-Primary and Primary level in cross-sectoral collaboration concentrating on substantive, curriculum based activities. In the year beginning Sep 2010, SEP2 partnerships involved over 4,000 students across Northern Ireland. See http://www.schoolsworkingtogether.co.uk/

Equality Commission for Northern Ireland   Page | 31

encourage sharing between providers from different sectors / management types in a way which could serve to advance good relations.

8.13   We note the importance of sustainability and the role of funding in that regard and therefore welcome the Departments commitment to use the shared education programme to determine how best to mainstream shared education funding for schools.

8.14   We continue to **recommend** that consideration is given as to how best to incentivise increased sharing of educational resources on cross-sectoral and ability lines, including via the common funding formula.

8.15   A number of research reports have highlighted key school level enablers in advancing shared education including the importance of high-quality contact; school leadership links between teachers; a focus on the curriculum and the sharing of resources between teachers. ETI have also noted[77] that a key challenge remains *"to engage schools/ organisations not already involved in community relations work"*. We **reiterate our recommendation** that the Department utilises lessons from the body of research[78] regarding sharing in education to advance key enablers.

Guidance

8.16   The Commission recognises the importance of guidance for schools who wish to embark on shared education and for those who wish to move toward greater interdependency and we **welcome** the work being undertaken by the Department to provide guidance on the different models of shared education.

Indicators and Evaluation

8.17   The Commission **continues to recommend** indicators to measure and review sharing and collaboration in education

---

[77] ETI (2013) A Final Evaluation of the International Fund for Ireland's Sharing in Education Programme http://www.etini.gov.uk/international-fund-for-irelands-sharing-in-education-programme/a-final-evaluation-of-the-international-fund-for-irelands-sharing-in-education-programme.htm
[78] The Commission's 2012 Submission to the Ministerial Advisory Group on Shared Education summarises a range of research regarding integrated education and the QUB Shared Education Programme.

Equality Commission for Northern Ireland   Page | 32

provision and governance – both to acknowledge success and promote improvement.

8.18   The Commission is also of the view that there is a real opportunity to capture and mainstream learning from projects such as the recently agreed Delivering Social Change (DSC) signature project. Data should be collected on the educational impacts on Section 75 Groups and children on FSM as part of the DSC and other programmes.

Areas of Specific Interest to the Inquiry

8.19   Aligned to the specific terms of reference to the inquiry, we also make the following comments:

Community Relations, Equality and Diversity (CRED) policy

8.20   Aligned to our remit and expertise, the Commission has not undertaken a detailed consideration of the effectiveness of the CRED policy

8.21   We **welcome** that the intended outcomes set out in CRED policy; namely *"to develop learners who understand and respect the rights, equality and diversity (including linguistic diversity) of all S75 groups"* have the potential to promote equality of opportunity and good relations across the full range of grounds, but **we note the recommendations** from the NIHRC and the MAG calling respectively for alignment and review of CRED. We **encourage** steps to maximise the effective use of CRED, and available funding to support the advancement of equality of opportunity and good relations via CRED and the school curriculum.

Engagement, including with parents and carers

8.22   The Commission reiterates the importance of engaging with pupils, parents, education providers and wider stakeholders to communicate the rationale for the proposed system and model(s) - to take account of barriers and enablers; to improve associated policy proposals and to incentivise any moves.

The Role of Special Schools

8.23   We consider that sharing in education must impact meaningfully and substantively on every participant.

1043

8.24   We reiterate our recommendation that the Department explore
        how a shared experience can be central to the education
        system as a whole, encompassing at all stages of educational
        provision – including routine sharing and collaboration between
        pupils and staff at special and mainstream schools.

Equality Commission for Northern Ireland

October 2014

9   ANNEX 1: The Equality Commission for Northern Ireland

1. The Equality Commission for Northern Ireland (the Commission) is an independent public body established under the Northern Ireland Act 1998. The Commission is responsible for implementing the legislation on fair employment, sex discrimination and equal pay, race relations, sexual orientation, disability and age.

2. The Commission's remit also includes overseeing the statutory duties on the Department to promote equality of opportunity and good relations under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 (Section 75) and to promote positive attitudes towards disabled people and encourage participation by disabled people in public life under the Disability Discrimination Act 1995.

3. The Commission's general duties include:
   - working towards the elimination of discrimination;
   - promoting equality of opportunity and encouraging good practice;
   - promoting positive / affirmative action
   - promoting good relations between people of different racial groups;
   - overseeing the implementation and effectiveness of the statutory duty on relevant the Department;
   - keeping the legislation under review;
   - promoting good relations between people of different religious belief and / or political opinion.

4. The Equality Commission, together with the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission, has been designated under the United Nations Convention on the rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) as the independent mechanism tasked with promoting, protecting and monitoring implementation of the Convention in Northern Ireland.

Equality Commission for Northern Ireland   Page | 35

10 ANNEX 2: Inequalities in Education: Facts and Trends 1998-2008

10.1 The Commission's 2010 publication *"Inequalities in Education: Facts and Trends 1998-2008"*[79] sought to consider patterns of educational attainment in Northern Ireland. Key findings included:

- Community background: Amongst school leavers, there has been considerable improvement in the highest level of educational attainment of both communities, although the gap between highest educational attainment of Protestant and Roman Catholic school leavers has widened. When the different equality groups are compared, community background is the area where fewest differences exist in 2007/08.
- Gender: Some differences are notable when looking at gender, particularly with regards to levels of highest educational attainment and subject choices within Further or Higher Education. While there has been considerable improvement in the highest level of educational attainment of both male and female school leavers, this improvement has been markedly more evident for females than for males.
- Those with / without a declared disability: There are still considerable differences in the highest educational attainment and in participation in Further or Higher Education between those with and without a declared disability. With regards to participation in third-level education, while those with a declared disability remain under-represented at this level, an improvement has occurred in the proportion who are accessing institutes of Higher Education in Northern Ireland.
- Irish Travellers: There has been a noticeable gap between the highest education attainment and destinations of Irish Traveller and non-Traveller school leavers. The majority of Irish Travellers left school with no GCSEs, while the majority of non-Travellers left school with GCSE or higher qualifications.

---

[79] ECNI (2010): Inequalities in Education – Facts and Trends 1998-2008. Available at http://www.equalityni.org/archive/pdf/InequalitiesinEducation_ResearchReport.pdf

11 ANNEX 3: "Ensuring the Good Relations Work in our Schools Counts" (2010): Relevant recommendations

"i) Greater focus on sharing and collaboration within service delivery - the Department, ESA and other key educational stakeholders to focus on maximising value for money and avoiding duplication of educational provision, by placing a greater focus on existing drivers, policies and practices that encourage greater sharing and collaboration, particularly on a cross-community basis. These include:

- ***Every School a Good School – a Policy for School Improvement** – with a focus on the best educational interests of all children, whatever the identity. This should particularly include the needs of those most at risk of not reaching their potential, such as the children of new residents and Travellers.*
- ***Adding good relations conditions to budgetary allocations criteria**, particularly in relation to capital builds and development plans, so there is a greater focus on cross-community relationship building.*
- ***The Review of Public Administration and Community Planning** – by encouraging greater local and regional clustering of services, particularly with respect to school and community resources, based on whole community need and not upon continued separate community provision. Good relations must be a direct underpinning principle within this planning process. Education should be seen in the broadest sense of the word*
- ***a holistic approach** which takes account of external family and community life as well as the school environment.*
- ***The Entitlement Framework** – encouraging schools to see what actions they can take to collaborate on a cross-community basis to meet the Entitlement Framework requirements.*
- ***Area Learning Communities** – the Department of Education to add a cross-sectoral and cross- community element to the funding criteria for the Collaboration Element, and to support the roll out of ALCs to all areas."*

SOURCE: The Good Relations Forum (2010): Ensuring the Good Relations Work in our Schools Counts – A Strategy to meet our needs for the 21st century.

Equality Commission for Northern Ireland (2)

Equality House
7-9 Shaftesbury Square
Belfast BT2 7DP

www.equalityni.org

Equality Commission
FOR NORTHERN IRELAND

13 March 2015

Mr Peter McCallion
Clerk, Committee for Education
Room 375, Parliament Buildings
Ballymiscaw
Stormont
Belfast
BT4 3XX

Dear Mr McCallion

Re: Shared and Integrated Education

I write in response to your letter dated 6 February 2015, following the
Commission's presentation to the Committee's Inquiry into Shared and
Integrated Education.

First, my apologies for the delay in responding to your letter but I was keen
for the Commission to discuss and approve its response to the Department of
Education's consultation on "Shared Education Draft Policy and Legislation"
consultation before I responded. I have enclosed a summary of this response
for the Committee's information and I would be happy to answer any
questions the Members might have or indeed forward our full response if
required.

In response to the Committee's request for sight of the relevant research into
Educational Inequalities in Northern Ireland, we have commissioned Queens
University to carry out this out and as noted in our written submission, as this
work is still ongoing, we are not in a position to share it at present. However,
when it is completed the Commission will forward it to the Committee and we
would be willing to discuss the issues raised further at that stage if the
Committee would find this useful.

The Committee sought further information on the Equality Commission's
position in respect of religious instruction in schools. Whilst the Commission
does not have a specific policy on this, it is our core position, as outlined in
our written submission to the Inquiry, that we recommend a move towards a
system of sharing based on teaching a diverse range of pupils together

Chief Commissioner: Michael Wardlow   INVESTOR IN PEOPLE   **Chief Executive:** Evelyn Collins CBE

through a shared curriculum in shared classes across the full spectrum of education providers. This is not to undermine the rights of parents to make choices regarding their child's attendance at specific schools, or for the provision of faith-based schools, but we consider that such considerations cannot overshadow the importance of a system of education seeking to maximise equality of opportunity and good relations.
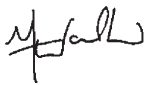
The Committee also sought further information from the Commission on the shared campus proposal for Moy Regional Primary School and St John's Primary School, Moy. As noted at the Committee session, the Commission is not aware in detail of the particular situation in the Moy thus it would inappropriate to comment on the specifics.

However, as set out in the aforementioned consultation response, our considered view is that a system of shared education has a central role to play in advancing a shared society and that children should have the opportunity to be educated together regardless of faith or background.

We hold the view that sharing in education must impact meaningfully and substantively on every learner and to this end we have highlighted the importance of sharing at all stages of educational provision. This, we believe, mirrors the Executive's commitment to sharing becoming *"a central part of every child's educational experience"* as set out in <u>Together: Building a United Community</u>, a position we have already welcomed.

I trust this is helpful and again, please feel free to contact me if the Committee Members have any further queries.

Yours sincerely

Dr Michael Wardlow
Chief Commissioner

	Direct line:	028 90 500 622 (PA)
	Textphone:	028 90 500 589
	Fax:	028 90 329 227
	E mail:	<u>executivepa@equalityni.org</u>

EQUALITY COMMISSION FOR NORTHERN IRELAND

EQUALITY COMMISSION FOR NORTHERN IRELAND

Summary of Response to Consultation on 'Shared Education Draft Policy and Legislation Consultation'

March 2015

1 Summary of Response

1.1 The Equality Commission welcomes the opportunity to respond to the Department of Education's consultation on a Bill and policy to advance sharing in education.

We welcome the draft Bill and policy as seeking to set out a definition and policy framework. We also welcome the actions in the draft policy providing for:

- co-ordinated support for schools and teachers;
- the development of a new teacher professional development strategy;
- advice and guidance on options for sharing;
- engagement with parents, carers, children and young people.

1.2 However, we do not consider that the proposed overall approach is sufficiently robust. We therefore set out a number of key concerns and associated recommendations.

Overarching Concerns

1.3 Our overarching concern is that the proposals are neither clearly nor sufficiently defined to ensure the development of a system of education with meaningful and sustainable sharing at its core, and which is aimed at positively changing the relationship between pupils, schools and the wider community.

1.4 We also consider that the proposals have the potential to fall short of the commitment set out by the Executive in Together: Building a United Community to ensure that "sharing in education becomes a <u>central</u> part of <u>every</u> child's educational Experience" [our emphasis]

1.5 We are also concerned that:

- there is a fundamental lack of coherence between the 'policy description' of shared education in the draft policy; and the definition of shared education as set out in the draft Bill.
- that the policy aim and associated outcomes for shared education have not been sufficiently developed.

1.6　In summary, while the consultation exercise and the detail provided are to be welcomed, we consider that for the potential of shared education to be realised in practice, it must be appropriately defined in legislation and clearly articulated through a coherent and co-ordinated policy framework.

1.7　To assist, we recommend that the Department take account of our full consultation response and our published recommendations on sharing in education, available via www.equalityni.org/sharededucation.

1.8　We would also welcome early engagement with the Department on their proposals.

Summary of Key Recommendations

1.9　We set out below a summary of key recommendations. Our full consultation response expands on these key points as well as providing further information in direct response to other specific aspects of the consultation.

Focus of Shared Education

1.10　It is recommended that the Department refines both the policy document and the draft Bill to ensure that there is a clear and definition of shared education and coherence between the policy document and the draft Bill.

1.11　We consider that the policy and Bill for shared education must:
- ensure that sharing impacts meaningfully and substantively on every learner.
- ensure that a shared experience should be central to the education system as a whole, encompassing at all stages of educational provision – pre-school; early years; primary; post-primary; special needs; and tertiary levels.
- routinely teach learners together via a shared curriculum in shared classes.
- better provide learners with shared awareness, understanding and experience of the value and range of diverse cultures,

identities and backgrounds in Northern Ireland; while also enabling learners from different cultures/communities to experience a shared society.

1.12 We note reports that only around 65% of schools would be eligible to participate in the proposed DSC programme. We recommend that the Department makes clear that the proposed sharing will fulfil the commitment set out by the Executive in Together: Building a United Community to ensure "that sharing in education becomes a <u>central</u> part of <u>every</u> child's educational experience"[1] [our emphasis]. We also highlight the requirement on the Department to assess the equality impacts of proposals.

Definition of Shared Education

1.13 The Commission highlights the apparent inconsistency between the Bill and the Policy, noting that the proposed definition of shared education in the draft Bill is narrower than the stated aims and objectives in the draft policy on shared education.

1.14 We are of the view that defining shared education only in relation to religious/political *and* socio-economic lines, limits the potential for shared education to advance equality of opportunity and good relations across other S75 grounds.

1.15 We recommend that the focus and wording of both the draft Bill and policy are further developed to ensure consistency in focus and clarity in implementation; including that:

- The core focus of the Bill should be centred on ensuring meaningful and sustained sharing between learners of different community background, while also ensuring that any definition is not so narrow as for other types of sharing to fall outside the legal definition.
- The associated policy seeks to find ways, alongside the core focus on community backgrounds, to encourage and facilitate sharing across all equality grounds; and to address the socio-economic issues which are experienced by a number of equality groups.

1.16 We also recommend that it may be appropriate that criteria for the prioritisation of support across a range of equality grounds are set out in the shared education policy (and DSC application process

---

[1] OFMDFM (2013) Together: Building a United Community (p29) - http://www.ofmdfmni.gov.uk/together-building-a-united-community-strategy.pdf

etc), rather than narrowly defining Shared Education in the Bill. For example, the Department could set criteria to prioritise support to those applications which evidenced the greatest degree of sharing beyond a core focus on community background – for instance on other equality or socio-economic grounds).

Proposal to include 'religious belief' and 'political opinion' within the definition

1.17   The Commission recommends that the Department gives consideration as to how the Bill and Policy will operate in practice and ensure this is more clearly articulated in the policy.

1.18   The Commission's Section 75 "Monitoring Guidance for use by Public Authorities"[2] notes that there are two options for monitoring religious belief - current stated religion or community background.

1.19   It is recommended that, in these particular circumstances, the Department give consideration to the potential of utilising the concept of the 'community background' of individuals for the purposes of assessing participation.

Statutory Obligations

1.20   It is recommended that the obligation on the Department in respect of shared education should be a duty, not a power; and that the duty should be to *'encourage and facilitate'* shared education.

1.21   The Commission is also currently of the view that the statutory obligation should sit with the Department. The Commission recommends that the Department sets out and further expands upon any specific rationale for proposing that certain additional arms length bodies be subject to a power.

1.22   We are aware that public discourse regarding the potential to further advance equality of opportunity and good relations in schools has set out a range of potential approaches - whether it be a discrete statutory obligation; Section 75 or some variant thereof; a policy directive from the Department; or mainstreaming through the curriculum.

---

[2]ECNI "Section 75 - Monitoring Guidance for use by Public Authorities" -
http://www.equalityni.org/ECNI/media/ECNI/Publications/Employers%20and%20Service%20Providers/S75M
onitoringGuidance2007.pdf

1.23 We note the consultation proposals to designate and place an obligation on schools under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act, but with proposals to *"reduce the demand... in terms of meeting their specific responsibilities"*[3]

1.24 The Commission has not to date supported the designation of schools under Section 75.

1.25 Whatever the model proposed, there are likely to be number of pertinent issues that require careful and robust consideration. These include, for example, key questions such as:

- whether or not a legislative approach is the most appropriate;
- if a obligation is to be placed to schools, should it be a discrete duty; under Section 75; or via some other means;
- what lessons can be learnt from the application of public sector duties in schools in other jurisdictions.

1.26 We would welcome early engagement with DENI, including on their reported work to examine options for the application of a statutory duty to schools, based on an examination of models from other jurisdictions.

Funding and Long Term Sustainability

1.27 The Commission recommends that the Department ensures that partnerships are sustainable in the long term.

1.28 We note the Department's intention to end earmarked funding for CRED and raise concern that this does not appear to be in keeping with mainstreaming shared education as a priority issue. We therefore ask the Department to clarify how community relations, equality and diversity work will be mainstreamed in the absence of earmarked funding.

1.29 We highlight the potential to build upon and extend existing education policy and practice (for example common funding; area learning partnerships etc) and recommend that consideration is given to how to best incentivise increased sharing on cross-sectoral and ability lines. Detailed proposals for the further mainstreaming of shared education, including through the inspection process, should be made explicit.

---

[3] DENI (2014) – Consultation – "Sharing Works: A Policy for Shared Education" – page 22

1.30   We also recommend that, in due course, the Department undertake work to further define the costs/savings associated with the proposed DSC projects and to evaluate to what extent these partnerships are likely to remain sustainable, after the initial funding period.

Clarity needed on policy outcomes and measures

1.31   We also consider that the policy aim and associated outcomes and measures for shared education have not been sufficiently developed.

1.32   We consider that the vision should be clear that it includes raising levels of educational attainment, and also seek to encapsulate that partnerships should be sustainable and aimed at positively changing the relationship between pupils, school and the wider community.

1.33   It is not clear how progress towards shared education will be measured in practice. For example, while Department officials have indicated in evidence[4] that they expect schools to move one point along a continuum of sharing in three different areas, this is not set out in the policy. We request further clarity around the focus of the continuum model and how it will work in practice. There should also be a clearer and stronger message in the final policy framework that schools should be moving towards a system of education which routinely teaches pupils together via a shared curriculum in shared classes.

1.34   We also highlight the importance of setting out a range of measures and goals – linking actions, outputs, outcomes and impacts. It is important that such measures move beyond describing policy outputs to consider specific measures of the outcomes and impacts that we would expect to see in society. For example, that sharing has impacted meaningfully and substantively on every learner; and provides learners with shared awareness, understanding and experience of the value and range of diverse cultures, identities and backgrounds in Northern Ireland etc.

1.35   We note that of the nine potential 'types of sharing' set out on page 12 of the consultation, only one explicitly focuses on sharing between learners (the others being centred on educator expertise, resources; professional development etc). We are thus concerned

---

[4] Shared and Integration Education Inquiry: Education Committee (21st January 2015): Evidence – Department of Education and Education and Training Inspectorate.

Equality Commission for Northern Ireland   Page | 6

that subsequent delivery may advance sharing which is not centred on ensuring a meaningful and substantive impact on every learner. Again, we raise concerns that this may fall short of the commitment set out by the Executive in Together: Building a United Community to ensure "that sharing in education becomes a <u>central</u> part of <u>every</u> child's educational experience" [our emphasis]

1.36   We reiterate our 2010 and subsequent recommendations regarding:

- The importance of indicators and evaluation to measure and review sharing and collaboration in education provision and governance – both to acknowledge success and promote improvement.
- The importance of data collection, across all Section 75 grounds and FSM eligibility, for all educational projects, including key Delivering Social Change projects.

Engagement with Parents, Carers and Children & Young People

1.37   We recommend that engagement should seek to communicate the rationale for any proposed system; to learn from experiences to date; to inform and improve associated policy frameworks / implementation plans; and to incentivise any moves.

1.38   We also recommend, in line with our consistent call for effective engagement with Section 75 groups, that the Department and other key bodies also take steps to ensure effective engagement with children & young people (C&YP) in the design, delivery, implementation and review of shared education initiatives.

Wider Issues in Education

1.39   Finally we take this opportunity to stress the need for wider action to address the structural barriers to shared education, including our concern about academic selection at age 11; our recommendations for the removal of the teacher's exception under FETO at secondary level; the need for greater sharing and collaboration in teacher training; and for actions to better understanding the reasons for, and impacts of, any differential patterns of enrolment to education providers. There is also a need to promote good relations and tackle prejudicial attitudes in all spheres, both inside and outside schools, so that steps taken to promote good relations in schools are supported by actions and behaviours at home and in the wider community.

Equality Commission for Northern Ireland   Page | 7

Fermanagh Trust

Summary of Fermanagh Shared Education Programme

Shared Education is where schools deliver part of the curriculum jointly on a cross community basis with their nearest neighbouring school from a different sector. In practice it means pupils from different schools coming together for joint classes, usually for half a day per week, each week during the academic year. On average, this equates to approximately 50 – 60 shared hours per school year for the participating pupils.

The Fermanagh Shared Education Programme commenced in September 2009 and progress in the first 3 years of the Programme is reflected in the uptake, in terms of participating schools, pupils and the extent and level of shared classes.

No. of Participating Schools

The following table shows the high proportion of schools participating each year in Shared Education. Note, that there are 43 primary schools and 14 post-primary schools in the County.

No. of Schools involved in Fermanagh Shared Education Programme (2009 – 2012/3)

	No. of Primary Schools Involved*	No. of Post Primary Schools Involved	Total Schools Involved
Yr 1 (2009/10)	43	6	49
Yr 2 (2010/11)	41	10	51
Yr 3 (2011/12)	42	14	56
Yr 4 (2012/13)	44	14	58

*   3 Church of Ireland National Schools in the RoI are involved in the Programme

The above shows that schools wish to be involved in Shared Education and that that interest is not waning.

No. of Pupils participating in Shared Education

The following table shows the increasing number of pupils participating each year in Shared Education.

No. of Pupils involved in Fermanagh Shared Education Programme (2009 – 2012/3)

	No. of Primary Pupils Involved	No. of Post Primary Pupils Involved	Total Pupils Involved	% increase from Yr 1
Yr 1 (2009/10)	1658	202	1,860	N/A
Yr 2 (2010/11)	2404	324	2,728	47%
Yr 3 (2011/12)	2645	672	3,317	78%
Yr 4 (2012/13)	3442	822	4,264	129%

The number of pupils involved in Shared Education has increased by 2,404 pupils from Year 1, which represents an increase of 129%, demonstrating the high level of demand for Shared Education in the County. Note that the number of pupils enrolled in Fermanagh schools in 2011/12 was as follows:

- Primary School pupils: 5,372

- Post Primary School pupils: 5,149

In the region of 64% of primary pupils in Fermanagh will be involved in Shared Education this year 2012/13 and 41% of all pupils in the County will participate in Shared Education this year.

No. of Shared Classes / Projects

The number of classes getting involved in Shared Education has increased incrementally over the 4 year period, as summarized in the table below.

No. of Shared Classes - Fermanagh Shared Education Programme (2009 – 2012/3)

	No. of Classes (Primary)	No. of Shared Classes (Post Primary)	Total Shared Classes
Yr 1 (2009/10)	30	17	47
Yr 2 (2010/11)	37	15	52
Yr 3 (2011/12)	52	21	73
Yr 4 (2012/13)	57	21	78

Community Relations Training for School Staff

Training was delivered to help schools in the implementation of Shared Education. The following table shows the participation in training that was organised by the Fermanagh Trust for schools.

No. of School Staff Trained in Community Relations
Fermanagh Shared Education Programme (2009 – 2012/3)

	No. of Staff Trained
Yr 1 (2009/10)	59
Yr 2 (2010/11)	114
Yr 3 (2011/12)	106
Total	**279**

Further staff training is planned for Year 4.

Joint Training / Events for Teachers, Parents, Boards of Governors and Families

In Year 2 & 3 of the Programme, the school partnerships were encouraged to further develop their linkages. To this end, partnerships provided joint training and events for parents, staff, members of boards of governors and also wider family members. The following table summarises the levels of participation at these events.

Partnership Building (Joint Training & Events)

	Parents	Boards of Governors	School Staff	Family Members	Total
Yr 2 (2010/11)	429	89	458	404	1380
Yr 3 (2011/12)	702	121	498	1013	2334

Again, it shows the growth in the joint collaboration taking place within the cross-community partnerships.

Respecting Difference Workshops for Parents

In addition, training was provided for parents on Respecting Difference in Years 2 & 3. The number of parents who attended the training is summarized in the table below.

No. of Parent Attendees at Respecting Difference Training Workshops
Fermanagh Shared Education Programme (2009 – 2012/3)

	No. of Parents who Attended
Yr 1 (2009/10)	N/A
Yr 2 (2010/11)	230
Yr 3 (2011/12)	169
Total	**399**

Another series of parent workshops are planned for Year 4 (2012/13).

Evaluation

External evaluations of the Programme concluded that Shared Education in Fermanagh has:

1.   Helped break down barriers between communities and helped increase trust and improved relationships between different sectors;

2.   Increased relationships and friendships between pupils from partner schools;

3.   Reduced fear, suspicion and mistrust of the 'other' community;

4.   Contributed to greater understanding of and respect for cultural diversity;

5.   Increased awareness of the benefits of shared education including educational, societal and economic benefits.

Area Planning

In February 2012, the Department of Education issued Guidance on Area Planning to develop a network of viable and sustainable schools that are of the right type, right size, located in the right place and have a focus on raising standards. The Terms of Reference for this work includes the in its aims and objectives:

- To reduce duplication of provision;

- To identify realistic, innovative and creative solutions to address need, including opportunities for shared schooling on a cross sectoral basis; and

- To maximise the use and sharing of the existing schools estate.

A number of school partnerships in Fermanagh have requested that shared models are explored in the area planning process.

Programme for Government (PfG)

The commitments in the PfG, provide an opportunity to sustain the impact and benefits of Shared Education:

1. Establish a Ministerial Advisory Group to explore and bring forward recommendations to the Minister for Education to advance shared education; and

2. Ensure all children have the opportunity to participate in shared education programmes and substantially increase the number of schools sharing facilities by 2015.

Concluding Notes

1. Shared Education has strengthened curriculum delivery and enhanced educational opportunities for pupils;

2. There is a demand from school communities for Shared Education;

3. The PfG and the on–going area planning process provide opportunities to sustain and embed shared education;

4. There is a need for joined up policy planning & implementation to ensure that shared education is effectively mainstreamed, to maximise its potential.

Forge Integrated Primary School
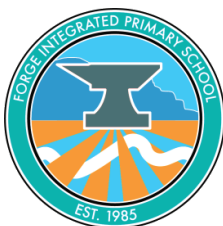
20 Carolan Road
Belfast
BT73HE

Principal: Mr. N Watson ast
Telephone 028 90 492177
Fax 028 90 641858

Submission to the Inquiry for Shared & Integrated Education from Forge Integrated Primary School.

24 October 2014

Dear Committee,

Thank you for inviting submissions to the Inquiry on Shared and Integrated Education. I write on behalf of the Board of Governors of Forge Integrated Primary School with particular reference to key barriers and enablers for Integrated Education.

It is our view that although the development and growth of Integrated schools in Northern Ireland has been significant over the course of the past 33 years there have been inhibiting factors that have resulted in growth being much less than would have been the case in different circumstances.

To choose to send your children to an integrated school in a society with deep and established divisions requires a degree of courage. For such schools to be successful they must be accessible and supported in order to become established.

Integrated schools have been supported through the 1989 Education Reform Order (NI) and subsequently by the Good Friday Agreement 1998 both of which underline a duty at governmental level to encourage and support integrated education.

In practice however, it is our view that this duty has, at times, been interpreted and administered in such a way as to act as an inhibiting factor on the growth of admissions and enrolments at integrated schools. The process for approval of permanent increases in admissions and enrolment numbers has, in some cases, led to integrated schools remaining artificially small.

This has suppressed the number of pupils in integrated schools and in some cases helped support the maintenance of pupil numbers in schools in other sectors.

The 'needs model' as employed by DE in recent years is an example of how permanent growth in integrated schools has been allowed only on the basis of a corresponding decrease in both the maintained and controlled sectors in a given area.

We contend that the application of such a model is inequitable and has not been applied to either of the dominant sectors where need is based on the number of places available only in the sector in question. The findings of a recent judicial review taken by Drumragh College seem to support this contention.

A number of integrated schools have struggled to gain support and make progress with these issues recently. It is ironic that we see suggestion from some academics and from CCMS that the integrated model hasn't grown to the extent that may have been expected.

No model of education can realistically grow if the mechanisms for growth are structured in such a way as to give more emphasis to protecting other sectors than to enabling growth in the sector that is developing.

We are not opposed to other genuine paths towards greater integration and there may be merit in some models of shared education. However, if shared education amounts to little more than having two or more separate schools in close proximity sharing some resources then we are likely to be investing in something that has a very limited impact.

There are hundreds of examples throughout Northern Ireland of sub-communities living in very close proximity to one another but quite separately. Sometimes that separation has a physical element as in the case of peace walls. More often the boundaries are invisible but none the less real. There are also numerous examples of such divided communities sharing resources such as leisure services and community facilities to an extent, but too often superficially.

Northern Ireland has dealt surprisingly effectively with some of the issues around segregated practices in the public realm and the idea of having different publicly funded institutions in terms of public sector workplaces or services is now unthinkable. Education remains the exception.

We believe that to fail to address the fact that the overwhelming majority of government funded mainstream schools here are still single identity institutions is out of step with almost every other country in Europe and beyond.

We accept that in some areas there are continuing difficulties with community relations that makes fully integrated schools difficult to establish. However, there is much research to support the fact that in many, many areas there is a real appetite for more integrated education. Our experience and observations are that the greatest impediment is not community relations or lack of appetite for integration but inadequate support and encouragement from authority. We feel that this lack of support is often a symptom of the opposition faced by ELBs and DE from those who would like to impede change and maintain the existing situation through limiting choice.

Integrated schools are a proven and sustainable means of bringing children together, promoting good community relations and developing a more cohesive and positive society for the future.

As we look towards exploring experimental models such as shared education it is also vital that that established and proven integrated schools are allowed the freedom to grow to their true potential and those barriers and impediments to growth are removed.

There is no more reliable or cost effective way of providing a genuinely shared education in those areas where integrated schools already exist and have demand for growth.

If we fail to encourage and develop proper, meaningful integration we will be failing our children and grandchildren. Sharing things out and creating two of everything has not worked in the past. There is plenty of evidence to underline the fact that sectarian divisions are still deep and that issues such as race and hate crime are developing problems here. Why on earth are we nurturing a system that keeps our children apart from their peers and neighbours during the most formative years of their lives?

Those political leaders who genuinely want to make Northern Ireland a safer, better, more prosperous place for all of its people must have the courage to meaningfully address segregated education. Generations to come will not thank us for baulking in the face of opposition from those in positions of influence who are prepared to put short term protectionism before long term peace, stability and prosperity.

We have outlined on the pages that follow our own story as a case study that illustrates the demand there is and the challenges we have faced around the growth of our school.

We will also happily engage in any verbal/face to face evidence gathering the committee are seeking input on. We held discussions with P5-7 pupils to discuss their views on and understanding of, Integrated, Shared and Segregated Education in Northern Ireland. A collation of their comments is included in this submission at Appendix 3. We have no doubt that we could put forward a delegation of pupils who would relish the opportunity to discuss their school with members of the committee.

Yours Sincerely,

Neville Watson
Principal & Secretary to the Board of Governors

1. Background

1.0 We are one of two Integrated Schools serving South East Belfast the other being Loughview Integrated Primary School.

1.1 We opened in 1985 without DE approval and initially funded by the founding parents, some of whom re-mortgaged their homes in order to fund the start-up.

1.2 Forge has grown from 28 pupils in September 1985 to its current 304 pupils in September 2014. Along the way the school went through the process of becoming an officially recognised school and took on controlled status to become the province's first controlled integrated school.

1.3 Pupil numbers in integrated schools have grown continuously since 1981.

1.4 Forge IPS is currently the most over-subscribed primary school at P1 admissions level in any sector in the South East Belfast area. This is evidenced in a written response from the Minister of Education to a question asked by Dr Alasdair McDonnell on 06 June 2014 (Appendix 4)

1.5 Forge IPS has also experienced a greater degree of growth than any other primary school in South Belfast over recent years with Department of Education figures for the period from 2009 – 2013 showing a growth of 22%(Appendix 3). If the period of growth is extended to the start of the current school year we have seen a 7 year growth rate of 35%.

2. Current Issues

2.0 We are at a crucial point in our development. The school no longer has the accommodation to allow further growth. We have previously been able to source additional accommodation through support from the Integrated Education Fund and with the support of BELB.

2.1 Difficulties in progressing a development proposal put us at risk of being unprepared for the start of the school year in September. The explanation given for slow progress is that decisions have to be weighed carefully as change could be detrimental to other schools. This argument is well versed in terms of the possible impact of growing integrated schools on non-integrated schools. However, it is not applied in the same way to schools in other sectors. Growth in Maintained and Controlled single identity schools is measured against the impact there may be on other schools in those sectors, not all sectors.

2.2   To put the timescale into context, we have been operating on a temporary variation to our enrolment and admissions number because we have been oversubscribed since 2007. We have asking for support for a development proposal from BELB since the spring of 2010.

2.3   In December 2013 we received acknowledgement from BELB that they would accept submission of a development proposal. We immediately began the process. In March 2014 the proposal was discussed at a BELB Board meeting but deferred pending clarifying information.

       It will now be November before the BELB can next schedule the proposal at a meeting and we have been asked to carry out the pre-publication consultation exercise for a second time at DE's request due to the time lag between its completion in February and now. The pre-publication consultation exercise was completed fully in February 2014 well within the 12 month period stipulated in the most recent DE circular on Development Proposals. It is difficult to see the logic in this repetition of process.

2.4   Given that we need to prepare for P1 admissions process in January this lag in terms of time has the potential to obstruct our ability to meet the demand for Integrated Education in our area.

3.   The Case for a Permanent Increase to Admissions/Enrolment Numbers at Forge IPS

3.0   Enrolment and admissions numbers are decided by the Department of Education, often when a school is first officially established. At Forge these are 250 and 36 respectively. These numbers were put in place in the late 1980s when the school enrolment was still below 100. As the demand for Integrated Education has increased these numbers have become increasingly problematic for us and clearly need to be revised to take account of the significant change in demographic and parental preference over the course of more than 20 years.

3.2   An admissions number of 36 for P1 is not functional. If we get more than 30 applications we have to split the class. Two small classes of 18 is desirable from a learning and teaching point of view however, these small classes do not attract enough funding to pay a teacher's salary. The school could not sustain classes of 18 throughout the school. Nor can we have classes of 36.

3.3   For the past seven years the school's Board of Governors have applied to DE for a temporary variation in our admissions and enrolment numbers to allow us to admit all applicants who have an Integrated school as first preference if they can be accommodated within two P1 classes under DE class size policy.

3.4   The reasons for aiming to admit all applicants are twofold. It allows us to be financially viable in terms of pupil teacher ratio in P1 classes. Primarily though, it means that we are providing an integrated school place for those in the area who want it. It is the view of our Board of Governors that the school has a responsibility to meet that demand and this is in keeping with Article 64(1) of the Education Reform (NI) Order 1989 which states a duty on the part of the Department of Education to 'encourage and facilitate the development of integrated education'.

3.5   Successfully being granted a temporary variation has allowed us to enrol most of our P1 applicants. As this is a temporary arrangement DE policy requires us to allow this enrolment number to reduce if pupils leave or do not take up offered places.

3.6   If we had not pursued this policy over the past seven years and instead sought a temporary variation to admit only 30 P1 pupils per year (one full class) 121 children would have been refused admission to Forge and forced to attend a school that was not of their preferred sector. This year, despite having admitted 60 children on the basis of a temporary variation, four children whose parents had elected an integrated school as first preference have had to be rejected. These children are unlikely to get a place in an integrated school in the South

Belfast area. Were we to adhere to our admissions number 24 children whose parents had chosen an integrated school place would have been rejected this year.

3.7 If we had not been prepared to go through this process year on year, seeking approval and additional accommodation our numbers would have remained artificially low, potentially adding weight to the misleading suggestion that integrated schools have not expanded as much as might have been expected. Our school could have grown more had there been a more encouraging policy towards growth.

3.8 Whatever your personal opinion on integrated education a situation where the equivalent of an entire class of children could be unable to get a place not only in the school of their choice, but also in the sector of their choice within a reasonable travelling distance of their home is inequitable. We do not believe this situation would be allowed to continue in either the established controlled or maintained sectors when the main impediment to resolving the situation is an artificial cap and concern about upset in other sectors. To be fair to the DE and our ELB such a situation has been avoided through the granting of temporary variations, however, without a more permanent arrangement we could face the same situation in 2015 but be unable to resolve it due to lack of accommodation.

3.9 Given that there is a legal duty for the Department of Education for Northern Ireland to facilitate and encourage the growth of integrated education the role of schools such as ours in facilitating that growth is of great benefit in helping meet that obligation and should not be inhibited.

3.10 As things stand we need a more permanent solution so that that we can be viable and help ensure that the demand for integrated school places in this area can be met. We want to have our enrolment and admissions numbers changed to allow the school to continue the natural growth we have seen in recent years and become a stable two form entry school.

3.11 We are now feeling positive and hopeful that our ELB will work very hard to support us through the development proposal process and we hope this is indicative of how things will be looking ahead for all schools in Northern Ireland. However, we know that experiences vary and ultimately the decision makers in this regard are DE.

3.12 Our pre-school enrolment and general trends in the area suggest that we will have another high number of applications in 2015. We also receive a significant additional number of applications from outside our own pre-school Unit. It is worth noting that up until the 2010 school year our pre-school had only 24 places meaning that in the three years prior to 2010 on average 39% of our P1 applications came from beyond our own pre-school.

4. Imminent Pressures on Forge IPS

4.0 Forge IPS must either continue to grow to enable class sizes that will attract income through the common funding formula that will sustain the school or, the school must reduce its staff, consequently reduce the number of classes, create composites and ultimately shrink in terms of enrolment. We found ourselves, for the first time in a decade, having to put in place composite classes for September of 2012 in order to live within our budget.

4.1 The reality is that our enrolment number of 250 is not and never was a number that can be sustained under the current common funding scheme. Likewise, an admissions number of 36 is nonsense given that the maximum number of children permitted in classes at Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 is 30 and to split 36 pupils into two classes of 18 is not a situation any school could sustain under the current budget system

4.2 Reducing the enrolment number would reduce parental choice in this area specifically regarding integrated places which would be contrary to both to our ethos and the very reason the school came into existence in 1985. It would also be contrary to article 64(1) of the Education Reform Order 1989 which refers to the Department of Education's duty to 'encourage and facilitate the development of integrated education'.

4.3   It would also be self-destructive for a school to pursue a reductionist policy in the current climate. We understand that the education minister is minded to look at making significant decisions around area based planning and school sustainability in the near future and a shrinking school will not sit well with this.

5.   The School's View on Future Provision and Related Challenges

5.0   We believe that there is very obvious potential for Forge to develop into a sustainable double intake primary school during the course of the next 2-5 years and the development proposal we have submitted to BELB is for that kind of phased growth. We submitted a proposal asking that from September 2014 or as soon as possible thereafter, to have our admissions number increased to 60 and our enrolment number increased to 320 rising to 420 by 2018.

5.1   The issue of under provision in the integrated sector in this area is quite straightforward. Our school and Loughview Integrated Primary School are both oversubscribed. While we know that there are local schools with unfilled places they are not integrated schools. There has been a tendency in the past for reference to made to a DE 'Needs Model' which has often been interpreted as suggesting that an increase in the Integrated sector should be matched by a decrease in other sectors. We would point out that this is not equitable, has not been applied to other sectors and is not fit for purpose.

5.2   The impact of growth on other schools has consistently been cited as an inhibiting factor in allowing our school to expand permanently. Our growth has been gradual and it is our view that we are not having a significant effect on the enrolment of other local schools. Many of them have also experienced some growth and it is not legitimate to suggest that other schools are declining due to our gradual organic growth. Nor is it legitimate to argue that one sector should be suppressed in order to arrest decline in another (see points 5.1 & 5.3).

5.3   The findings of a recent judicial review taken by Drumragh College in Omagh has underlined the obligation on the Department of Education and in turn ELB's to comply with article 64(1) of the Education Reform Order 1989 which refers to the department's duty to 'encourage and facilitate the development of integrated education'. The findings of this review recognise that the needs model, is an analytical tool that can aid area based planning but should not impede the implementation of article 64. It also recognised a major flaw in the model in that it assumed no growth in the integrated sector, which is clearly not the case in reality. Justice Treacy commented in his summing up that, 'The department needs to be alive to the article 64 duty at all levels, including the strategic level.'

5.4   At time of writing we have been told that BELB that due to the repetition of the pre-publication consultation process our proposal will not be scheduled by BELB until their November meeting. It then has to progress to DE and go through the formal post-publication consultation process.

5.5   This leaves the school grappling with questions around how many children to admit in January 2015? Whether intended or not, the rate of progress of the development proposal submitted nine months ago but as yet unpublished has the potential to diminish our ability to plan and prepare effectively.

5.6   We are very pleased that the process is moving along and that the current management at BELB are working with us to progress the matter, however the process has been slow and out of sync with the needs of schools in terms of aligning with key events in the school and financial year.

5.8   If we as educationalists at school, ELB and Departmental level are to continue to enhance this community then the importance of developing effective and sustainable schools like Forge that are experiencing growth and success cannot be understated.

5.9   It would be a travesty if a growing and sustainable school were to be arrested in its development because it was unable to obtain the necessary permissions and support from

the Department of Education and the Education and Library Boards to reach its optimum sustainable size.

5.10   The demand for Integrated Education in this area can most effectively be met in terms of sustainability, cost and quality of provision through the development of the resources and experience that already exist at Forge.

6.   Conclusion

We hope that our case helps illustrate how demand for Integrated Education in Northern Ireland has been growing in recent years and the difficulties encountered by schools such as ours in seeking to meet that demand.

It is too difficult for integrated schools to gain support from the authority bodies in order to grow.

It is deeply disturbing to read at time of writing in media reports that there is no plan to have any representation for the integrated sector on the new single Education and Library Board. In such circumstances these difficulties will persist and policy and practice is likely to be dominated by the interests of the controlled and maintained sectors.

We appeal to the committee to work towards the provision of an equitable system that upholds parental choice and does not inhibit the growth of integrated schools in order to preserve an educational landscape that limits choice and reinforces separation.

Appendix 1

Enrolment History – South Belfast Primary Schools 2009 – 2013

School Type C = Controlled, CM = Catholic Maintained, CI= Controlled Integrated,
GMI – Grant Maintained Integrated, IMM = Irish Medium Maintained

School name	Type	Enrolment History – No. pupils at DE census in October of each year.					DE Enrol No.	Over/Under Subscribed	Grow Factor (If over-subscribed	Empty Places	% Under subscribed	Under Subscribed 5 Years +
		09	10	11	12	13						
Belvoir Park	C	230	216	206	208	216	370	Under		154	42	Yes
Blythefield	C	94	93	85	83	82	513	Under		431	84	Yes
Botanic	C	189	178	180	176	176	210	Under		34	16	Yes
Cairnshill	C	439	458	429	429	429	583	Under		154	26	Yes
Carryduff	C	164	167	166	171	171	333	Under		162	49	Yes
Donegal Road	C	153	144	140	157	175	316	Under		141	45	Yes
Fane Street	C	137	135	152	167	187	495	Under		308	62	Yes
Finaghy	C	433	422	416	415	423	465	Under		42	9	Yes
Harding Mem.	C	227	203	195	185	195	210	Under		15	7	Yes
Knockbreda	C	136	168	162	156	160	225	Under		65	29	Yes
Nettlefield	C	205	218	243	248	268	375	Under		107	29	Yes
Rosetta	C	151	147	165	179	190	413	Under		223	54	Yes
Stranmillis	C	400	406	407	403	402	408	Under		6	1	Yes
Taughmonagh	C	153	177	171	166	170	160	Over	11%	-10	-6	No
Holy Rosary	CM	276	260	273	255	312	508	Under		196	39	Yes
St Anne's	CM	800	768	794	804	811	860	Under		49	6	Yes
St Bernard's	CM	393	400	393	403	406	446	Under		40	9	Yes
St Bride's	CM	786	776	788	807	817	809	Under	4%	-8	-1	No
St Ita's Primary	CM	397	427	453	483	508	510	Under		2	0	Yes
St Joseph's C'duff	CM	388	392	378	381	392	436	Under		44	10	Yes
St Malachy's	CM	211	202	230	248	263	350	Under		87	25	Yes
St Michael's	CM	417	413	415	416	416	409	Over	0%	-7	-2	Yes
Forge IPS	C.Int	223	231	248	265	273	250	Over	22%	-23	-9	No
Cranmore IPS	GMI	189	195	183	185	188	203	Under		15	7	Yes
Loughview IPS	GMI	393	395	401	406	412	406	Over	5%	-6	-1	No
Scoil An Droichid	IMM	105	99	113	118	120	145	Under		25	17	Yes

Collated from data sourced from Department of Education for Northern Ireland

Appendix 2

Oversubscribed Places at Primary 1 Level 2014

Dr McDonnell asked the Minister of Education to detail the number of oversubscribed places at Primary 1 level in each education sector in South Belfast, that are administered by the (i) Belfast Education and Library Board; and (ii) South Eastern Education and Library Board, as of 1 May 2014.

(AQW 33701/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The information requested for schools in South Belfast is set out in the following tables:

Controlled

School	Approved Admissions Number	First Preference Applications	Number by which over-subscribed
Rosetta PS	59	25	-
Harding Memorial PS	30	31	1
Nettlefield PS	54	45	-
Taughmonagh PS	28	25	-
Stranmillis PS	58	75	17
Finaghy PS	66	69	3
Donegall Road PS	45	24	-
Fane Street PS	71	26	-
Blythefield PS	73	7	-
Botanic PS	30	37	7

Catholic Maintained

School	Approved Admissions Number	First Preference Applications	Number by which over-subscribed
Holy Rosary PS	73	61	-
St Anne's PS	120	123	3
St Bride's PS	116	130	14
St Michael's PS	58	76	18
St Malachy's PS	50	58	8

Controlled Integrated

School	Approved Admissions Number	First Preference Applications	Number by which over-subscribed
Scoil An Droichid	21	23	2

Other Maintained

School	Approved Admissions Number	First Preference Applications	Number by which over-subscribed
Forge PS	36	60	24

Grant Maintained Integrated

School	Approved Admissions Number	First Preference Applications	Number by which over-subscribed
Cranmore PS	29	25	-

South-Eastern Education and Library Board

Controlled

School	Approved Admissions Number	First Preference Applications	Number by which over-subscribed
Knockbreda PS	30	27	-
Belvoir Park PS	53	29	-
Cairnshill PS	83	61	-
Lead Hill PS	30	8	-
Carryduff PS	48	22	-

Catholic Maintained

School	Approved Admissions Number	First Preference Applications	Number by which over-subscribed
St Joseph's PS	60	66	6
St Bernard's PS	60	61	1
St Ita's PS	82	95	13

Grant Maintained Integrated

School	Approved Admissions Number	First Preference Applications	Number by which over-subscribed
Loughview PS	58	77	19

Note: The figures were supplied by the Belfast and South-Eastern Education and Library Boards and reflect the position at 30 April 2014.

Source: Northern Ireland Assembly.

Pupil Voice

We want to include the views of some of the children at our school as part of our submission. We had discussions with P5, 6 and 7 children (8-11 year olds) based on the questions below. Pupils made notes and we've bullet pointed most of the main comments. We have included most (some comments that were of a very similar nature haven't been repeated) without elaboration, as the children recorded them. The comments are therefore in keeping with the age and sophistication of the children but we think that the underlying message comes through. 'Out of the mouths of babes...'

Questions about Integration

1. What do you think it means to be at an Integrated Primary School in Northern Ireland?

   - I feel good to go to an integrated school because you have a different mix of friends. P5

   - I think it means we come from different religions and countries. P5

   - What makes us integrated is that we take care of all children. P5

   - It means that people from all over the world can come P6

   - We accept any religion or culture. P7

   - It is a great opportunity as there aren't that many integrated schools. P7

   - We love learning together. P7

   - At Forge there is no discrimination against anyone who comes from a different country or is of a different religion. P7

2. What do you think makes this school different from other schools that aren't integrated?

   - I think it means that we are all different and although we come from different cultures, religions and countries we are friends. My friend is from Poland and we have fun together. P5

   - Our school is different because there is a mix of people from different countries and religions. P5

   - It makes everyone learn more and discover loads. P6

   - I think that being an integrated school is very good and can help people learn about new religions. P6

   - We are different because we share lots of things and it's better. P6

   - Being in an integrated school is different from other schools in that it doesn't matter where you are from. P6

   - Being in an integrated school is different because some schools separate the boys and girls and some schools separate religions. P6

   - You can be educated and learn from each other. P7

   - One of my best friends is Catholic and without an integrated school I wouldn't have met him. P7

   - You can believe that Protestants and Catholics can work together. P7

   - In my old school - it was perfect but it was posh and boring and everyone was the same. If you're in an integrated school everyone is different. P7

   - It doesn't matter whether you have religion or not. We have the choice to take part or not in religious activities like prayers.

   - You can make friends with children from other faiths, we are not all the same. P7

- We worry less about people getting offended, about differing opinions. We appreciate and accept that we are all different and have different thoughts on different matters. For example, football shirts aren't banned on non-uniform days because we can express our identity in a safe, secure place.

- There are equal opportunities for all.

- We are more relaxed/freer to be ourselves here!

3. How would you feel if you couldn't go to an integrated school because there were no places and you had to go to a school where most pupils were just Catholic or Just Protestant?

    - I wouldn't like it if I went to just a Protestant or Catholic School because I wouldn't have a mix of friends. P5

    - I think it would not be fair. They might have a good education but some people would not be able to go. P5

    - It's not a good idea to separate Catholics and Protestants because you might never get to meet new friends. P7

    - I wouldn't be able to meet friends with different backgrounds. P7

    - You wouldn't have the same choice of friends because everyone's the same. P7

    - Wouldn't feel comfortable/wouldn't be as diverse so it would be boring. You would be with the same type of people as yourself. P7

    - Children who don't relate to either the Catholic/Protestant faith would feel excluded or uncomfortable. At Forge we can learn about each other's beliefs. P7

    - You would feel cross that the choice of having an integrated school has been taken away from you.

    - If you had no Faith you could be upset because people might question you – they might not be as open minded. P7

    - During religious lessons you might feel shunted aside and uncomfortable. P7

    - I'd be worried about bullying because I might be the odd one out. P7

4. What do you think of the idea of having two schools, one Catholic and one Protestant close by and those schools sharing some things like sports' halls or classrooms and maybe also sharing some teachers or lessons?

    - I suppose it's alright but it would be better if they were integrated. P5

    - They might share some lessons or school trips.P6

    - I think it would be good for two different schools to use the same buildings together. They'd have to be friends.

    - I think it would be better to wait for a while to see if they like it! P6

    - I think it would be good for Catholic and Protestant schools to make friends. P7

    - Two schools would have very different ethos and wouldn't necessarily marry together well. P7

    - Building two schools and swapping teachers seems far more effort/hassle in an already busy day. P7

    - We are submerged all day in different cultures. Anything else would be watering down what we do naturally every day. P7

    - This sounds like a government money saving scheme. Do they really want us to mix or is it just a half measure to make it look as if they are addressing the issue of more integrated education? P7

5.   Is there anything else you would like to say to our local politicians about integrated schools?

   ■ Give us more spaces in integrated schools and more integrated schools. P5

   ■ I would like to say get more integrated places. P5

   ■ I think that there should be more integrated education. P6

   ■ I think that there should be more integrated education because everyone feels welcome. P6

Fort Hill Integrated PS and Nursery Unit

FORT HILL INTEGRATED PRIMARY SCHOOL AND NURSERY UNIT

Principal: Mr C S Anderson, BEd(Hons) MSc DipCom PQH(NI)
Email: canderson581@c2kni.net
Telephone: 028 9266 4505
Fax : 028 9266 7847
Website: www.forthillips.co.uk

Low Road
Lisburn
BT27 4TJ

Mr P McCallion
Clerk to the Committee
Committee of Education
Room 375, Parliament Buildings
Ballymiscaw
Stormont
Belfast

22nd October 2014

Dear Mr McCallion

I wish to respond to your request for written evidence with regard to Integrated Education.

Following a successful ballot of parents and approval from the Department of Education, Fort Hill Primary officially gained Integrated Status as from 1st September 2009 and now is a controlled integrated school.

As a school we welcome children of all faiths and ethnic backgrounds while still retaining an overall caring Christian ethos where children can be educated in a safe and friendly environment. This in itself is not that different from most schools; however, as a school we have seen the beneficial impact of **TRUE Integrated Education** on our pupils, parents and staff. It is far more than rubbing shoulders with fellow human beings, whatever their size, on a daily basis who we think *may have* differences to ourselves.

Integrated Education is **not a porridge pot** where everyone is blended together and only share the same facilities. I liken true Integrated Education to a **salad bowl**, learning together but also being educated about each other's different traditions, views and faiths whilst being proud of our own individual culture and learning always, to respect others different from ourselves.

Over the last five years of gradual transition, Fort Hill's journey has totally widened and enriched adults' and children's views and why our school is now different to many others. I firmly believe this is a main reason why we have become heavily oversubscribed with 67 applications for 26 nursery places and 51 applications for 30 P1 places this year leaving many families disappointed about not getting the school of their choice.
The Department of Education is currently <u>not</u> meeting the demand for TRUE Integrated Education within Lisburn City.

I would recommend that you visit schools such as Fort Hill to experience first-hand what we are achieving with our whole community.

We change tomorrow's world by what we build into our children today.

Yours faithfully

C S Anderson
Principal

General Teaching Council Northern Ireland

NI Assembly Inquiry into Shared and Integrated Education in Northern Ireland

Written Submission from The General Teaching Council Northern Ireland

1.1 Introduction: a neutral position

As the professional body for teachers in Northern Ireland the General Teaching Council (GTCNI) maintains a neutral position in relation to sectoral interests.

1.2 Terms of Reference

For that reason the Council as a body which represents all teachers and all sectors considers that it is not in a position to offer specific views and the Terms of Reference in relation to:

■ *The nature and definition of Shared Education and integrated Education as it applies across all educational phases;*

■ *The key barriers and enablers for Shared Education and Integrated Education;*

■ *Alternative approaches and models of good practice in other jurisdictions in terms of policy interventions and programmes;*

■ *Priorities and actions to improve sharing and integration.*

The Council wishes, however, to offer a view in relation to **promoting the professionalism and capacity of teachers to meet the competences outlined in specific statements in the Northern Ireland Teacher Competence Framework (GTCNI 2007) and the Revised Code of Values and Professional Practice (GTCNI 2012) that relate to the concept of Shared and Integrated Education**

This response replicates elements of the Council's response to the Ministerial Group on the advancement of Shared Education in Northern Ireland November 2012

2.1 The Northern Ireland Teacher Competence Framework

The Northern Ireland Teacher Competences statements (2007) highlight:

■ *at statement (8)*

'Teachers will have developed a knowledge and understanding of the need to take account of the significant features of pupils' cultures, languages and faiths and to address the implications for learning arising from these'.

■ at statement (12) *'Teachers will have developed a knowledge and understanding of the inter-relationship between schools and the communities they serve, and the potential for mutual development and well-being'.*

2.2 The NI Code of Values and Professional Practice for teachers

The Code of Values and Professional Practice for teachers was reviewed in 2012 to include a new section called, 'Commitment to the Community' and including the following statements

■ *Teachers:*

  ● *promote good community relations within and between schools and across the wider society in Northern Ireland;*

  ● *promote social justice and equality of opportunity as fundamental to community development and well-being.*

2.3 Review of the Northern Ireland Teacher Competence Framework and the Code of Values and Professional Practice

In line with its Corporate Plan 2013-16 and in response to recommendations from the OECD NI Report into Assessment and Evaluation Frameworks (2013) the Council is reviewing the Teacher Competence Framework and the Code of Values and Professional Practice with a view to developing them into a working tool to assist schools in school development planning, self-evaluation and planning for Continuous Professional Development (CPD) and Performance Review and Staff Development (PRSD). Should a commitment to Shared Education be made statutory this may have implications for the revision of the Teacher Competence Framework.

3.1 Building Teacher Capacity in relation to 'Community-related' Competences and the Code of Values and Professional Practice

Building Teacher Capacity in relation to 'Community-related' Competences and Code of Values and Professional Practice will require that all sectors consider the nature of the ethos and identity which they promote and the extent to which their ethos and identity is welcoming and inclusive to others.

The Council considers that the limited focus and resources dedicated to these key educational priorities to date has constrained the development of teachers' professional capacity to respond to the aspirations articulated within the Teacher Competences and the Code of Values and Professional Practice.

Deep professional engagement with these challenges is crucial. The 'Anti-Bias Curriculum' (ABC) and the 'Sharing Classrooms, Deepening Learning' Project provides models of good practice within this jurisdiction.

3.2 Evaluating teacher/school capacity building for the community-related aspects of the Teacher Competence Framework and Code of Values & Practice

A system is considered "coherent" when curriculum, pedagogy, assessment and other drivers and incentives are all 'aligned and reinforce one another' (Oates, 2010: 13).

To help schools to 'self-evaluate' the extent to which they are developing teachers' professional capacity to respond to the aspirations articulated within the competence statements and code of values and practice (outlined at 2.1. & 2.2.above) the Council has developed and the CLASS Dynamics Matrix (set out at Appendix 1)

This matrix has been shared with the NI Council for Integrated Education; the Shared Education Project at Queen's University; and members of ETI who will be evaluating the Shared Education project.

Deep engagement with all of the components set out in the matrix is considered to be essential for effective development of teachers' capacity to engage with the competence framework. From the Council's perspective, the component relating to strategic staff support –(enhancing teachers capacity to understand, embrace and respond to the potential of shared education for the good of young people, society and the economy as outlined in the teacher competence framework) – is of central importance.

The Council's report 'School –Based Professional Development' suggests models of CPD that would support collaborative working between schools.

3.3 Evaluating teacher/school capacity building in relation to pupil community-related engagement

The matrix also encourages evaluation of the extent to which pupils are empowered to initiate, plan and engage co-constructively with their teachers (and pupils and teachers in other schools) in worthwhile cross-cultural and community-related activities.

Respondent Details

Name:	Dr. Carmel Gallagher (Registrar)
	Mr. Gerry Devlin (Senior Education Officer)
Organisation	GTCNI
Address:	73/75 Great Victoria Street
	Belfast BT2 7AF
Telephone Number:	90333390 Fax Number: 90438787
E-mail:	cgallagher@gtcni.org.uk gdevlin@gtcni.org.uk

Appendix: 1 SOLO or SHARED?

A taxonomy for evaluating the quantity and quality of schools' engagement and potential for transformation in response to Shared Education

SOLO stands for the Structure of Observed Learning Outcomes (Biggs and Collis 1982). The criteria have been adapted to encourage schools to self evaluate and ask deep questions about the quantity and quality of their engagement with other schools and communities. The aim is to offer reflective challenge, within the confines of logistical constraints, towards deeper engagement and sustained sharing activities that can influence the wider education policy context. Evaluation should consider:

Quantitative data: number and frequency of shared pupil, teacher, senior management, whole school, board of governor and/or community engagement

Qualitative data: breadth and depth of engagement in planned activities related to Curriculum Learning Assessment Strategic Support and its Social Significance for pupils*, teachers, senior management, whole school, board of governors, wider community

The nature of engagement is categorized as:

- **Prestructural** – schools engage in unconnected activities.

- **Unistructural** – schools make simple and obvious connections between areas of engagement

- **Multistructural** – schools make deeper connections, but do not avail of the potential for meta-connections

- **Relational** – schools demonstrate how engagements relate to one another to achieve deeper value

- **Extended** – schools make deep connections and demonstrate how learning has been generalised and transferred into new situations

Degrees of participation	Pupil initiated, sharing decisions with fellow pupils and teachers from their own and other schools	
	Shared initiation and direction	
	Consulted and informed	
	Assigned and informed	
	・ Tokenism	
	・ Decoration	
	・ Manipulation	
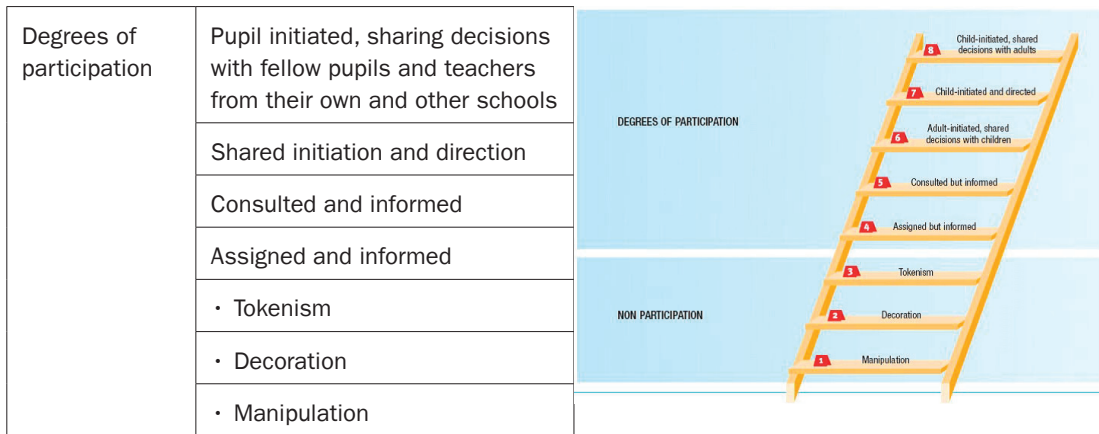
Degrees of participation

(Adapted from HART, R. 1992 which was concerned with pupil-teacher sharing)

SOLO or SHARED? - Evaluation Matrix

Criteria to challenge and evaluate the quantity and quality of school engagement with other schools and communities

Quantity, quality and 'dynamic' of CLASS engagement	Prestructural Haphazard poorly planned unsustained (Decorative)	Unistructural Singular planned regular engagement (Tokenistic)	Multistructural More than one planned regular engagement (assigned and informed)	Relational Multiple areas of engagement are integrated, coherent regular and sustained (embedded)	Extended sustained whole school engagement with issues of equality, inclusion and cultural diversity (deeply embedded)
C **Curriculum** Any shared activity to enhance breadth of provision					
L **Learning** any shared activity designed to enhance active pupil learning					
A **Assessment** Any shared activity to gather, analyse, interpret and use information about students' progress and achievement to improve teaching and learning					
S **Strategic Support** any shared activity designed to enhance active teacher learning & CPD					
S **Social Significance** measurable (educational, reconciliation, social, cultural) outputs	Impact likely to be decorative tokenistic narrow and transient	Impact likely to be lower-order, surface and narrowly experienced		Impact likely to be higher-order deep and sustained, going beyond the mechanics of sharing towards genuine working together to address shared challenges and reconciliation	

Hart Memorial Primary School and Presentation Primary School

Shared and Integrated Education

When completing this submission, Presentation Primary School and Hart Memorial Primary School have considered the following directions:

1.   Review the nature and definition of Shared Education as it applies across all educational phases- including consideration of the need for formal statutory definition and an obligation to facilitate and encourage Shared Education

2.   Identify the key barriers and enablers for Shared Education

3.   Identify and analyse alternative approaches and models of good practice in other jurisdictions in terms of policy interventions and programmes

4.   Consider what priorities and actions need to be taken to improve sharing and integration –including the effectiveness of the relevant parts of the CRED policy. The need to engage more effectively with parents/carers

1.   **Background to Shared Education in Hart Memorial Primary School and Presentation Primary School**

We strongly feel there is a need "*for a formal statutory definition and an obligation in statute to facilitate and encourage Shared Education*". We believe the shared history and commitment between our schools have led us to a place where we can deliver Shared Education.

Background

Hart Memorial PS and Presentation PS have worked together in Shared Education for over 20 years firstly through Education for Mutual Understanding programmes then the Schools' Community Relations Programme. We applied for and were accepted for Primary Curriculum Partnership Programme and we now have funding through Community Relations, Equality & Diversity. During this time, our schools have developed strong professional and personal relationships among staff and pupils.

Education for Mutual Understanding

This began with one teacher from each school working together and ensuring their sporting activity encompassed all aspects of the cross community ethos in that children were encouraged to sit together, work together and have mixed groups at all times. This project between the two P7 teachers was a success due to the commitment of both teachers who went over and above their remit to make all activities truly cross community based.

Development

In 2003 Presentation PS got a new principal and in 2005 Hart Memorial had its P7 teacher promoted to the principal's post. This P7 teacher was the teacher who had built the initial link with the P7 teacher from Presentation Primary School.

From this budding relationship and under two newly appointed principals the schools decided to explore the initial P7 project and deepen the link between the two schools. The commitment from the principals and teachers in both schools has seen Presentation Primary School which now has an enrolment of 257 pupils (from 60 in 2003) and Hart Memorial Primary School which has an enrolment of 387 pupils work together to develop and build their link to what it is today: nine classes from each school involved in CRED partnership projects addressing real issues.

Schools' Community Relations Programme

The initial link began with sport. With SELB advice, we wished to develop the link (at that time still only between the two P7 classes) and to begin to look at real community relations issues. So, with help from BEAM, we dramatized and performed Dave Duggan's short story "The First Ship in the Sea." This play tackled deeper issues around religion and culture and was performed to parents from the two schools in Portadown Town Hall - a bold step from both schools due to the content of the play. It was very well attended by all stakeholders along with representatives from DENI and SELB.

The schools then moved to the next level by developing SCRP connections between as many year groups as possible. This was ably endorsed and supported by Jayne Simms, SELB, who worked with and encouraged both schools to participate in a variety of activities for all year groups. Many of these joint projects used drama, art and sport as media through which issues were addressed. During one year, our P7 classes joined in developing a joint school song with Tommy Sands entitled 'Portadown' which culminated with a performance in front of the Mayor of Craigavon, parents, families and other dignitaries. Other highlights included a performance in the Market Place in Armagh comprising drama and song and which was attended by an ETI representative. Towards the end of the SCRP, we began what has become an annual trip for the P7 children to Corrymeela, reinforcing 7 years of working together – an incredible and most memorable experience for all concerned.

Primary Curriculum Partnership Programme

The PCPP programme was introduced in 2011 and was a two year project which encouraged deeper relationships with and involvement by *all* stakeholders in both schools. Through the PCPP project we held many joint ventures such as parent sessions with Paul Grey/Peter Sherlock. Teachers and classroom assistants had more in-depth planning and training and also experienced joint workshops.

Through PCPP, we moved on to address controversial and divisive community relations issues. We were also interested in widening children's cultural awareness since 55% of Presentation Primary School's enrolment was made up of Newcomer children. For example, P3 classes explored the area of celebrations perceived to belong to specific communities - St. Patricks Day and the 12th July - which concluded with a performance to a packed audience of over 200 parents and Governors and which included the Lord Mayor of Craigavon and ETI. A DVD was made of this show for parents and also for ETI dissemination of good practice. Primary 5 classes undertook the topic of Community which involved visits to churches of differing denominations in the neighbourhood; some parents were initially resistant to this. Primary 6 classes worked on Identity through the medium of flags. A display of their work was publically launched in a unit of the town's High Street Mall at the height of the regional 'flag crisis'. P7s looked at Sectarianism whilst the P4s examined Shared History through World War 2. The schools created a merged school choir which went to a recording studio to cut a cd.

Throughout the programmes, parents from Hart Memorial Primary School were encouraged to collect their children from the joint sessions in Presentation Primary School and vice versa. We held joint assemblies where parents from one school came together with parents from the host school in the audience.

Community Relations, Equality & Diversity

By using the model developed through PCPP and by building on already well established relationships among staff, we have continued to address the issues which need addressing. The link between the two schools continues to strengthen and develop: shared SLT meetings; joint training at Baker Days and School Development Days; inter school standardisation of levels for cross curricular assessment; regular co-ordinator meetings; shared Boards of Governors meeting…to name just a few areas where our schools come together.

2. **Identify the key barriers and enablers for Shared Education**

Enablers

We believe Shared Education involves the **shared vision of all stakeholders**. It is the embodiment of all the years of building **relationships** and relies greatly on the **enthusiasm** of all staff. On a practical level, it requires **joint planning**, **spending time together** and **addressing the real issues** of Strand 2 of the PDMU curriculum.

It **takes time** and relationships need to be established, supported and cemented. CRED is an excellent way in which this can take place although Shared Education involves so much more, as is laid out in this submission.

We have **joint Baker Day and School Development Days**. We **share training and resources**. This only works because **we link areas in our School Development Plan** through **joint SLT meetings, reporting regularly at Boards of Governors meetings**. With regard to developing working relationships among staff, we need to build in **time for planning** as this is an essential aspect of making Shared Education work; without this dedicated time between partners, the good work we have done over 20 years would not have been possible.

We have been held as an example of good practice in Shared Education by ETI – a dvd was made of the success we experienced through PCPP. We have invested a lot of **time and effort** in getting **all stakeholders on board** and this has not always been the easiest path for both schools. Through **openness and good communication** with all stakeholders we have achieved this. The geographical proximity of our two schools has been an advantage to us in building our relationship on a genuine level.

Another important point for success in Shared Education is that both schools continue to have **strong individual identities** as well as having a **shared ethos**. This is an important feature which enables all stakeholders to feel safe to come on board.

Barriers

One barrier to Shared Education is definitely **budgets** which can restrict planned activities although worthwhile Shared Education does not require a large financial outlay. However, funding for joint planning - the major foundation for a successful relationship – is essential. **Time** for staff members to meet is essential for planning and relationship building.

3. **To improve shared education**

We both feel there needs to be an **obligation** placed on all schools to participate in Shared Education. To link and work effectively with another school in their area, to share vision, expertise, resources and experiences need to be a **statutory part of the curriculum**.

We believe Shared Education requires **ring fenced money** without lengthy application forms. In the past we have spent much time form-filling for small pots of funding. Planning and evaluations can be used to account for the funding received. Shared Education should be part of the ETI **inspection process** as with any area of the curriculum.

Parental involvement is vital and could be increased with help from outside agencies. Schools may not always have the expertise, time or funding available to do this. **Parental education** on Shared Education is necessary for full community support.

4. **Pupils views**

We would like to share with you the opinions of our current pupils who have been working together for up to seven years. We believe their opinions are the most important part of our report as Shared Education impacts on them directly.

We asked our pupils 3 questions:

1.   Name 3 benefits of working with your partner school

2.   Name one highlight of working with your partner school

3.   How could we make Shared Education better in the future

Name 3 benefits of working with your partner school

Presentation	Hart
· We meet new friends and visit their school · We learn lots of things which make us different such as cultures, religions, schools · We get to work as part of a team · We visit many community places which we would never get a chance to see	· Making new friends & getting to know each other; meeting them at clubs outside school · Doing fun activities together to learn in an enjoyable way · Learning about our own identities and others' · Learning to accept and respect people from different cultures / countries / religions – and not to fight about these things · Learning what happens in a different school

Name one highlight of working with your partner school

Presentation	Hart
· I love working with the respecting differences puppets. They really make me see how problems can be easily solved · Being creative with ICT and having different opinions when working as part of a team to create Powerpoints and videos · I enjoy working together on everything we do · I loved designing new school crests. It was really enjoyable and gave us a new identity. I had never thought of this before	· Creating shared art and displaying the results in the town for our parents and the community to see · Presenting our shared learning at a performance for lots of schools and the Minister for Education · Making friends from other countries and talking in their language; meeting up with new friends · Making shamrocks and sashes then putting on a play

How could we make our shared education with our partner school better in the future?

Presentation	Hart
· We should come together to have assemblies together in each other school as I love to see my mummy make new friends with parents just as I have made with my friends in my partner school · I would love to have Golden Time together in each other's school · We could learn new languages together · We could have more ICT tasks together · I love having a new teacher to listen to · We need to meet more often	· More opportunities to play together before lessons start; more time to complete work – sometimes activities are rushed · More shared educational trips and some just to have fun eg wall climbing · Opportunities to help younger children in our partner school, maybe as Reading Buddies · Meeting up more in other venues to socialise ; have film nights; put on a play for our parents

Email to: committee.education@miassembly.gov.uk

Hazelwood Integrated College

Hazelwood Integrated College

Specialist School in Creativity & Visual Arts

Registered Charity No. XR 22627

24 October 2014

Dear Mr McCallion,

In Celtic tradition hazel woods are synonymous with knowledge and wisdom. Hence the name 'Hazelwood' encapsulates the aspirations of the pioneering Protestant and Catholic parents who, back in 1985, wanted something different from the segregated and selective education system that existed then and still exists today in Northern Ireland. Against a backdrop of daily sectarian violence it was the dream of those courageous parents that the new Hazelwood schools would shine like beacons and be rooted in a wisdom that would spread far and wide.

Today the Hazelwood beacons shine brighter than ever. Hazelwood College is a thriving integrated, non-selective, and mixed, 11–19 secondary school of 917 students (with growing demand). It is situated on a sectarian interface on the Whitewell Road in North Belfast. Its physical campus is *truly* a shared space, but it is its unique integrated ethos that sets it and other integrated schools apart.

Ethos is often a loosely defined term and is used to describe the affective as well as cognitive learning that takes place in a school. Results and research have consistently indicated that the integrated schools can compete very favourably in the cognitive aspect of the equation. However, the same research and evidence, gathered from hundreds of parents and pupils, shows that where they excel and where they are significantly different from segregated schools is in the informal, day to day learning that takes place. In Hazelwood Integrated College our Catholic children, Protestant children and those children of other or no faith, meet, greet, and squabble, make-up, laugh and play with each other, every single day, throughout their most formative years.

If schools are to shape social change, which in a post-conflict Northern Ireland it is generally recognised they should do, and be supported by government to do so, then this change must fundamentally begin in the very institutions we educate our children in and in the way we educate them. Change of any significance will never happen when over 90% of our young people remain in a highly selective and divided education system. This is particularly illogical when that lack of will appears to be because there are already unfilled spaces in the segregated schools.

Starving the supply for parents wanting integrated education at pre-school also shows lack of will. Pre-school education provision attached to existing segregated schools disenfranchises those parents who desire integration and they are left with no choice than to send their children to these alternative segregated schools. This perpetuates the problem and normalises segregation in infants from the very earliest days of their learning experiences.

iNet
International Networking for Educational Transformation

Specialist Schools and Academies Trust
EXCELLENCE AND DIVERSITY

INVESTORS IN PEOPLE

Principal:
Kathleen Gormley
BA. (Hons), MA., PQH

70 Whitewell Road,
NEWTOWNABBEY
BT36 7ES

telephone: 028 9077 4202
fax: 028 9077 7989

email: info@hazelwood.belfast.ni.sch.uk
website: www.hazelwoodcollege.co.uk

Doing little also appears to us to be contrary to what was agreed in the Good Friday promise which charged Government with the promotion of integrated education. It is difficult to accept that the Northern Ireland Assembly Committee for Education should consider the need to obligate in statute the facilitation and encouragement of shared education when there is already a legal obligation to promote integrated education. 'Where there's a will there's a way' and integrated education must not be sacrificed at the expense of what at best can be described as isolated success stories of sharing, to at worst, diluted initiatives and unsustainable passing fads.

We fully recognise the merits of sustainable and meaningful movement towards any arrangement that encourages the development of mutual respect and understanding between our communities, and particularly our young people. In this context Hazelwood Integrated College has always demonstrated its willingness to lead by example and offers our wider community an already established and recognised shared space through its Extended Schools programme.

In its recent OFMDFM Shared Education bid to locate a North Belfast STEM Centre on the Hazelwood campus, support was forthcoming from practically every school in the North Belfast and Newtownabbey Area Learning Communities. The bid was rejected. Nonetheless, we remain committed and it is our intention to enter into Phase 2 of the OFMDFM Shared Space bid process. Indeed we would be pleased to be included in any initiatives that we consider would develop the extensive groundwork in integration and integrated education for which we are recognised both here in Northern Ireland, in the United Kingdom and also abroad, particularly in the United States.

Integrated education works. There is a plethora of evidence that supports what we in integrated education already know, and that is, the friendships and relationships that develop between our pupils last a lifetime and the values of tolerance and mutual respect learned side by side in the classroom are carried with our young adults into an increasingly diverse and pluralist society.

We would be delighted if the Committee for Education would accept an open invitation to visit our integrated college. We would also be more than happy to offer our shared space to them to host some of their meetings in the future.

> I went out to the hazel wood
>
> Because a fire was in my head
>
> *The Song of the Wandering Aengus*, W.B.Yeats

Yours sincerely

Maurice Fitzsimons
Deputy Principal, Hazelwood Integrated College

Hazelwood Integrated Primary School
Board of Governors

Response to Department of Education Committee request for Evidence: Integrated and Shared Education

October 2014

Introduction

Hazelwood Integrated Primary School was established in September 1985 by parents who were committed to providing Integrated Education to their children in North Belfast. They believed that bringing children together (Protestant and Catholic) from an early age would help heal the divisions that had blighted Northern Ireland society for many years.

We have over 450 children attending our Primary School and Nursery, 50% of whom are entitled to Free School Meals, 30% having Special Educational Needs and over 10% are newcomer children. The religious breakdown for the school is 46% Catholic, 30% Protestant and Other/None 24%.

We are an integrated, co-educational, inclusive school. We value all our pupils as individuals and respect their right to be different and to excel in different ways. It is our intention that all children attending Hazelwood Primary School will develop an understanding, acceptance and appreciation of those from different cultural backgrounds.

Historically, the communities located within the Whitewell area have experienced sustained inter-community issues for many years. However, it is our view that Hazelwood Integrated Primary has had a positive impact on easing tensions and improving community relations.

Why Integrated Education?

A report commissioned by the Integrated Education Fund in 2011[1] demonstrated that there was strong public support for integrated education with almost nine in ten people favouring integrated schools. In fact, many surveys such as: Millward Brown Ulster (2008, 2003); Ipsos MORI (2011); Young Life and Times Survey (2003-2011); and Northern Ireland Life and Times survey (1999-2010), all highlighted that support and preference for integrated education remains high. For example the 2003 survey showed a majority of people surveyed (82%) personally supported integrated education in Northern Ireland and in 2011 this had increased to 88% of those surveyed. Respondents also seen Integrated Education as 'very important to peace and reconciliation in Northern Ireland' increased from 60% in 2003 to 69% in 2011. The Northern Ireland Life and Times (1999) and Young Life and Times (2003-2010) surveys found that over one third of respondents would like to send their children to an integrated school if there was one in the vicinity.

As a Board of Governors of an Integrated Primary School we are somewhat dismayed that the recent political and policy discourse has moved away from Integrated Education – where support is extremely high – to 'shared education'. 'Shared Education' is not the same as Integrated Education. We believe 'shared' is a disguise for politicians saying that for the foreseeable future our children (from all communities) will continue to be educated separately. This is not what we want for our children and it is not what we want for future generations growing up in Northern Ireland.

---

1   Attitudinal Survey on Integrated Education
     http://www.ief.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2011/09/Attitudinal-Survey-Final-Report.pdf

It is unacceptable to be promoting 'shared education' while there is a complete lack of regard for the statutory responsibility on the Department of Education to encourage and facilitate Integrated Education.

Many policy initiatives in Northern Ireland do not reflect many of the preferences expressed by parents from many surveys (as noted above) which consistently support Integrated Education which they see as promoting mutual respect and understanding. We would remind you that the concept of Integrated Education was endorsed in the Belfast (Good Friday) Agreement, 1998, being seen as a way to contribute to peace and reconciliation.

Integrated Education is not about Catholics going in one door and Protestants in another – being educated in separate parts of a building. Integrated Education is about children from all sections of our community learning and sharing together, experiencing all religions, building trust, having a mutual understanding and respect for their own and each other's religion and differences.

Surely we do not need to remind you of the problems related to segregation? Integration in school from a young age has been well documented to make a positive contribution to societies in Northern Ireland. A 'shared school' lacks the deeper commitment to structural and social change for our children – we cannot allow the commitment shown to our children offered by Integrated Education to be lost.

Our school not only provides benefits for children and young people, it also offers benefits to the local area and society as a whole within Northern Ireland. Research conducted by Montgomery et al[2] noted that Integrated Education fostered good relations and had 'significant and positive social influence on the lives of those who experience it.' Other research[3] also noted that pupils attending an Integrated School adopted a more positive position on issues such as politics, religion and identity.

An example of our integrated approach is seen day and daily in our activities. All our children celebrated the Queen's Jubilee in 2013, children take part in Gaelic sports, children are involved in projects relating to Protestant history, Irish Language as well as learning about other faiths. The school is also seen as a beacon for the community with sporting and leisure classes held in the evenings and weekends, the school has also acted as a centre for mediation when tensions have developed among local groups.

Northern Ireland is a society in transition, demographics are changing. It is no longer an issue of Catholics and Protestants but about all religions. The model of Integrated Education lends itself to ensuring newcomer children are treated with respect and mutual understanding and they feel a sense of inclusion in school and community life.

Below is a personal statement from a Governor and a Parent:

I am a mother of 4 children, who have all attended Hazelwood nursery, primary and college. As a parent from a strongly nationalist tradition living in segregated North Belfast I made a conscious decision to send them to school where they would make friends with children from other traditions and grow up with an innate awareness that there were different ways of viewing our society and 'others' were not to be feared or regarded as suspicious. Hazelwood was the right choice.

Integrated education is not just about 'throwing together' children from protestant/catholic backgrounds but has a core commitment to:

- *Equality and diversity*

---

2 Gallagher, T., Smith, A. and Montgomery, A. (2003). Integrated education in Northern Ireland: Participation profile and performance. Coleraine: UNESCO Centre

3 Stringer, M., Irwing, P, Giles, M., McClenahan, C., Wilson, R. and Hunter, J. (2010) Parental and school effects on childrens political attitudes in Northern Ireland. British Journal of Educational Psychology (80), pp. 223-240. DOI: 10.1348/000709909X477233.

- *Child centred education*

- *A partnership with parents*

- *Christian ethos*

Hazelwood takes an active daily role in these principles, taking the 'whole child' into account, not just their academic ability or social standing. They explore and celebrate the traditions of different cultures throughout the year; e.g. when my children made their first communion and confirmation their whole class attended. They in turn attended their friends' cultural events and gained first-hand knowledge of diverse cultural backgrounds.

Today, they are in their 20's and still remain in close contact with the friends they made at school. While taking an active part in their personal cultural background, they have learned to express this in an informed way and are comfortable in any social setting.

Integrated Education is not just about sharing a building but giving children an opportunity to discuss history, politics and culture from different perspectives in a safe environment and seeing those with different opinions as friends first and foremost. This can only be learned by growing up together, attending the same classes and forming a close social bond with others by having similar childhood experiences; through attending Hazelwood my children have learned that difference is to be celebrated not feared.

Terry McKeown

Conclusion

It is clear that public opinion supports Integrated Education as a means of contributing to peace and reconciliation as well as promoting mutual respect and understanding. We have demonstrated that Integrated Education makes a positive contribution to children and societies within Northern Ireland, promoting positive attitudes and reducing sectarian attitudes. There is little doubt that Hazelwood Integrated Primary has made a positive impact upon the lives of all children and the community within the Whitewell area. We would therefore recommend the Education Committee makes a clear statement of support to encourage more integrated education as a way of supporting a shared future for all of our children.

The Board of Governors of Hazelwood Integrated Primary is pleased to make this response, we would be very happy to give oral evidence to the committee if needed.

Contact details:

Board of Governors
Hazelwood Integrated Primary School
242 Whitewell Road
Newtownabbey
Belfast BT36 7EN

Hazelwood Integrated Primary School

242 Whitewell Road
Newtownabbey
Co Antrim, BT36 7EN

Tel: 028 9077 0421 Fax: 028 9077 7381

Principal: Mrs Patricia Murtagh

Dear Mr Mc Callion

I am writing in response to your request for written evidence with regard to Shared and Integrated Education on behalf of the governors, staff, parents and pupils of Hazelwood Integrated Primary School.

In recent years huge investment in shared education has revealed, that it seems to the key decision makers, to be a good idea that some concession is made to educating children together. We agree that this is indeed a good idea – we feel it would be more effective if they were in a shared context all the time. There are some 'shared projects' that have produced useful outcomes and the integrated movement are happy to see the beginning of any relationship building – but as politicians try to sell shared education as a **viable alternative** to integrated education- those of us who see integration every day in practice know it is not.

Shared education projects that create a school in which Catholics go in one door and Protestants another - are nothing short of insane! At best it allows pupils to share some time together but in essence, whilst better than nothing, it is similar to most CRED work.

These projects are a step towards encouraging children to engage with each other for a limited time –but by returning to their own environment after a brief engagement the effects on attitudes are minimal. In our schools the positive relationships we foster go on every second of every day and beyond the classrooms into communities. These friendships are real, long lasting and make a difference.

The recent judgement by Mr Justice Treacy as part of the court Proceedings surrounding Drumragh clarified that integrated education 'is a standalone concept' that is to say educating together at school, protestant and catholic children.

This is sharing at its most effective and the success of this case and its re-emphasis that DE are obliged to 'encourage and facilitate integrated education' raises the question - is the search for a legal obligation to support Shared Education an avoidance of this obligation to support Integrated education? We continue to demand the implementation of Article 64.

Surely there is an ethical duty on all of us to recognise the potential of educating children together all the time as a means of nurturing friendships across boundaries and across generations –therefore making cultural strife and conflict less palatable- some of our schools are educating third generation children – a lasting impact made.

The nature of our society remains complex – falling levels in English and Maths, underachievement in Protestant working class boys, racist tensions, issues around flags and emblems all proving to be challenges – we should be normalising our schools in the recognition that a mix of social groups, religions, cultures and academic abilities ensures better outcomes for all. From a young age, bias and prejudice can become embedded however influencing young minds to think in a different way makes for well-balanced young people and adults of the future.

Groups from other parts of the world have come to the Integrated sector to learn from us and to apply elements of the model to their own troubled environments. Why then is it so difficult for our own politicians to see what is under their nose – a model for removing barriers,

for opening hearts, for sharing and most importantly for giving children skills to deal with difference in a respectful way.

There is a need for an explicit reference to Integrated education in Shared Education Policy – funding should be given to all on this continuum – to maximise its effects.

At Hazelwood integrated Primary we practice meaningful engagement each day and challenge all to face their own prejudices and deal with all the areas which in our society have caused conflict – open and honest engagement with each other adults and children alike creates positivity and a context for creative change.

If there is a genuine desire to move Northern Ireland forward we urge you to talk to the integrated sector in particular to NICIE and in addition we welcome you come and visit our schools - see what we do and talk to our children- we are not a gimmick or a phase – we are real and strong and determined to persist because we know that what we do is important!

Integrated Education Alumni Association

Integrated Education Alumni Association Submission to Education Committee

To the Committee for Education,

I am writing on behalf of the Integrated Education Alumni Association in response to the request for written evidence in regards to shared and integrated education.

Sixteen years on from the signing of the Belfast Agreement, Northern Ireland is enjoying a period of relative peace and stability. Yet, despite efforts to promote integration in our political and policing institutions, our educational system remains largely segregated. Of Northern Ireland's total number of pupils, a mere 7% attend integrated schools. As alumni of integrated schools, we have benefitted from an education instilled with tolerance and understanding which has positively enabled us academically, professionally and socially. However, this option is not available to all children in Northern Ireland and we believe that this is a factor which continues to promote division in our province.

This response aims to propose the opinions of past pupils of the integrated education sector and address the key areas set out in the Committee's Inquiry.

- We believe that the nature of the education system in Northern Ireland fundamentally hinders the growth and development of integrated education. Only an approximate 6% of schools, both primary and post primary, are currently designated as integrated. This poses a number of important issues which should be addressed. Firstly, the sparse nature of integrated schools in Northern Ireland severely limits both the number of pupils these schools can individually enrol each year, and also geographically limits who can attend these schools. It is difficult to accurately judge the demand for integrated schools in Northern Ireland as it is largely based on public opinion, however numerous polls, such as those carried out by the Belfast Telegraph, and research undertaken by the Integrated Education Fund among others, has shown evidence of a strong demand for the sector. The small number of integrated schools in Northern Ireland also continues to complement the opinion that integrated schools are 'special/other' instead of promoting the sector as 'normal'. The implementation of a formal definition for integrated education may be of benefit in improving the understanding of the sector and help clearly designate other schools as integrated. For an example, Botanic Primary School in Belfast could be regarded as integrated due to the diverse demographic of its pupils however it is not designated as such.

- In recent years, the Executive has attempted to develop the shared education sector in Northern Ireland. However, the development of this sector should not act as a substitute to integrated education. The demographic of Northern Ireland is rapidly diversifying which in turn provides further reason to promote and develop the integrated sector. Encouraging a Protestant and Catholic school may reduce costs but it does not develop the relationships and tolerance that are integral parts of integrated teaching. If anything, shared education campuses crystalize the division within our education system. Shared education further instils the 'us and them' mentally, a botched solution to a deep problem. If we can teach Protestant, Catholic and other faiths in the same campus, why can't we teach them in the same classes together? Within integrated education, all cultural and religious beliefs and identities are protected and championed – religious freedom is a core principle of integrated education. Not only does integrated education teach tolerance for other cultures and religions, it prepares pupils for full participation and understanding of the changing face of Northern Ireland's work place and broader society as a whole.

- To address the second area of the Committee's Inquiry regarding barriers and enablers of integrated and shared education, there are a number of important issues in regards to this. Firstly, as previously stated, there are a number of hindrances to the development of integrated education such as the small numbers of integrated schools in Northern

Ireland and geographical issues. However these are just two of a number of issues. The image and perception, whether misconceived or not, of integrated schools is something that requires addressing. For example, Lagan College, despite having high quality teaching standards and some of the highest GCSE/A Levels in the country , did not have the best facilities prior to the opening of their new school, which may have led to prospective pupils attending different schools and not benefitting from the unique educational and social experience of attending an integrated school. Another substantial issue is breaking the status quo that is prevalent in many families across Northern Ireland. The influence of family members in the choice of which school a child should attend is arguably the most important factor in this decision-making process. It is of the highest importance that integrated education is promoted as risk-free and a pathway to post-educational success, and that parents are given an equal opportunity to send their children to an integrated school. The possible domino effect that this could have would be greatly beneficial to the development of integrated education. A more concerted effort from the Office of First and Deputy First Minister to promote the benefits of integrated education beyond academic results may help address some of the misconceptions around integrated education. Another issue that hinders the growth of integrated education is segregated housing. Integrated education produces great advocates of the sector, however many pupils return to divided communities. We believe that the development and expansion of integrated education would help in the future to break down barriers, including physical 'peace' walls, and in turn help the development of integrated housing.

- In terms of the Inquiry's third area of looking to other jurisdictions for possible ideas for the development of integrated and shared education, we believe that this is unnecessary. In Northern Ireland, we already have a successful integrated system, despite its small nature, which is producing students with impressive academic qualifications and debunking ill informed misconceptions amongst some of our population. Like our policing system, many jurisdictions have come to Northern Ireland to research our integrated education system in order to adopt some of its core values and apply them in their respective educational structures. If other countries are using our integrated system as an example of how to teach those from different religious backgrounds and divided communities together, why is it necessary that we look to other nations for a different solution? We should promote the successes of our integrated education sector and herald it as something to be proud of, an example of the importance of teaching our youth together. Children born at the time of the ceasefires are now adults and their children will soon be entering the education system. It is of the upmost importance that the Executive promote integrated education – not as a distant solution or a possibility, but as a forward thinking, positive change in the now. As previously stated, Northern Ireland's demographic is constantly changing with many people from around the world coming to live and work here. Conservation of an ineffective, duplicative binary system will continue to hinder our future generations in all aspects of life. Now is the time to change this system and prevent future generations from missing out on the invaluable benefits of integrated education. It is now beyond a question of having the option to change, there is a clear need for change in our education system to prepare our citizens for being vital members of an increasingly globalised stage.

Thank you, in advance, for your consideration of our views in relation to integrated and shared education.

Regards,

Robert Magee, on behalf of the Integrated Education Alumni Association.

Integrated Education Fund

Submission to Shared and Integrated Education Inquiry

Opening Minds

Integrated Education Fund

The Integrated Education Fund (IEF) welcomes the opportunity to make a written submission to the Education Committee's Shared and Integrated Education Inquiry. The IEF would also welcome the opportunity to present evidence to the Education Committee.

About the IEF

The IEF is a charitable trust established to provide a financial foundation for the development and growth of integrated education in Northern Ireland. It is recognized as a charity by the Inland Revenue under Reference XR52574 and is governed by its Deed of Trust. Its mandate is derived from the expressed demand of parents and individual schools who seek integrated education for their children and pupils.

What is integrated education?

Integrated education brings children, staff and governors from Catholic and Protestant traditions, as well as those of other faiths or none, and other cultures, together in one school. Integrated schools differ from most other schools in Northern Ireland by ensuring that children from diverse backgrounds are educated together every day, side by side in the same classrooms. Integrated schools are not secular but are essentially Christian in character while welcoming all faiths and none. Through their admissions criteria, schools aim to ensure a balanced number of Catholic and Protestant children. But it is also the ethos that is particularly distinctive; it is deliberately and strategically planned to promote inclusiveness and mutual respect. Integrated schools do not simply admit students from different traditions and expect them to fit in, nor to pretend that everyone is the same. For example, Catholic children are offered Sacramental preparation at P3, P4 and P7; Protestant children can generally avail of the Delving Deeper programme to develop their own faith knowledge while all pupils are introduced to the ideas, beliefs and practices of the major world religions and humanist philosophies.

In the post-primary schools the integrated ethos is apparent in approaches to Religious Education and History, for example, where sensitive and deliberate care is taken to address different, potentially contentious viewpoints in a balanced and thought-provoking way.

The integrated ethos also extends to the staff and the Board of Governors of each integrated school.

Introduction

Northern Ireland is committed to shaping a united future and one of the main tests of that commitment will be in how we choose to educate our children: largely apart, as at present, or increasingly together. The idea of educating all children together under the same roof, instead of apart in separate Catholic schools and State schools, is not new. Arguably there is more goodwill towards it now than at any stage in the past. The OFMDFM strategy 'Together: Building a United Community' (2013) recognises '…the segregated nature of Northern Ireland's education provision' and takes the view that 'achieving a full shared education system…is a crucial part of breaking the cycle of …sectarianism…'

Northern Ireland maintains an education system that educates its children separately, by religion. 91% of Protestant primary children attended controlled (mainly Protestant) schools and 88% of Catholic primary children were enrolled in Catholic maintained primaries in the last academic year. At the same time, 88% of Catholic post-primary pupils attended Catholic maintained or Catholic managed voluntary schools and 89% of Protestant postprimary pupils attended controlled schools.[1] Only 7% of children overall attended integrated schools.

Consequently, pupil interactions are mostly with peers, teachers and others from their own community, with limited opportunity to understand other perspectives and cultures. In contrast, many parents here wish for their children to be educated together with children of other traditions. A recent LucidTalk survey identified that 79% of parents would back a move to see their children's school change to integrated education.[2]

Much research and analysis has been carried out about the segregated nature of schooling. A detailed insight into the cultural and political awareness of 3-6 year olds found there is a rapid increase in the proportions of children beginning to identify themselves with one particular community and to make sectarian comments at the ages of five and six. The fact that these represent the first few years of compulsory schooling is unlikely to be a coincidence. One explanation is likely to be the segregated nature of the school system itself.[3]

Educating all children together is an essential part of the reconciliation process and of building a society that celebrates respect, understanding and friendships across traditional divides. The IEF believes that integrated education can help all children become better citizens of Northern Ireland and of the increasingly global world we all inhabit.

Achieving quality educational outcomes for all should be the central focus for the Executive and the Education Minister. This is best achieved within a reformed education system in which children of all faiths or none, and regardless of ability, ethnicity, cultural or social backgrounds, learn and are taught together in their local area. This would make best use of scarce educational resources in a time of unprecedented reductions in public expenditure and would undoubtedly bring longer-term economic, educational and societal benefits to us all.

Successful reform of a long established education system cannot happen overnight but Northern Ireland has already come a long way and taken major steps forward. Further change is needed - and communities should be at the heart of education planning.

The current area based planning process provides an opportunity to ensure parental choice is at the very heart of the education system, by embedding a mechanism which reflects real parental demand rather than the current system, which simply ratifies the existing institutional or sectoral structures.

Northern Ireland cannot afford to wait to change how we educate our children. The cost of inaction will mean another generation of children growing up with limited contact with the 'other community' and limited experience of diversity. We need to open minds to the benefits of educating our children together, side by side, in the same classrooms. It needs to be the norm – not the exception.

---

1   http://www.thedetail.tv/issues/150/religioninschools/how-integrated-are-schools-where-you-live

2   Lucid Poll result in Belfast Telegraph, 28th February 2013

3   Connolly, P., Smith, A. & Kelly, B. (2002) Too young to Notice? The Cultural and Political Awareness of 3-6 years Olds in Northern Ireland. Northern Ireland Community Relations Council

Review the nature and definition of Integrated Education as it applies across all educational phases

On 15th May 2014 the High Court delivered its judgment in the judicial review action brought by Drumragh Integrated College. The Court clarified the statutory duty to 'encourage and facilitate the development of integrated education' enshrined in both Article 64 of the Education Reform (NI) Order 1989 and the Good Friday Agreement. The Court held that integrated education was a standalone concept and plainly envisages education together at the same school. It also held that an integrated school strives to achieve an equal balance in relation to worship, celebration and exposure to both faiths. This is reflected in its constitution, and the Board of Governors must strive in its ethos to achieve this. The statutory duty in Article 64 applies to education that is integrated throughout and not education that is delivered by a 'partisan board.'

Key paragraphs of the Judgement

'Integrated Education is a standalone concept' [para. 50]

'Integrated Education must be the service of imparting knowledge to young people from all backgrounds as equals' [para. 51]

A school which has a predominantly Catholic or predominantly Protestant ethos which is reflected through the religious events celebrated, the religious symbolism present throughout the school, the manner of worship engaged in the school cannot be said to be delivering integrated education (i.e. serving members of different religious groups equally) [para. 52]

'[This is] because, as part of its constitution as an institution it is fundamentally oriented to one religious cannon over another. Therefore, the minority faith in any denominational school is not receiving 'equal' exposure to its faith as the majority faith' [para. 52]

'As against this, an integrated school strives to achieve an equal balance in relation to worship, celebration and exposure to both faiths' [para. 53]

'For these reasons it must be the case that the integrated education referred to in the article is education that is integrated throughout and not education that is delivered by a partisan board' [para. 53]

Consider the need for a formal statutory definition and an obligation in statute to facilitate and encourage Shared Education

The IEF would support the need for a formal statutory definition of Shared Education because such clarity is essential for effective monitoring, assessment and accountability. Shared education is currently defined by the Department as involving two or more schools or other educational institutions from different sectors working in collaboration with the aim of delivering educational benefits to learners, promoting the efficient and effective use of resources, and promoting equality of opportunity, good relations, equality of identity, respect for diversity and community cohesion.

Increased collaboration between schools is a positive development. It represents the chance to increase contact between pupils, teachers, governors and parents from different backgrounds. Shared classes should, in theory, strengthen the potential for greater integration as pupils and schools experience the benefit of learning together.

However, shared facilities and shared campuses do not equate to shared education. They may facilitate the potential for collaboration between schools but it is the level of interaction and contact between pupils that counts the most.

Shared education cannot be considered a substitute or alternative for integrated education and it must not develop as a barrier to integrated education. The choice of a fully integrated school must be encouraged and supported if that is what is desired by the local community.

Whilst shared education takes place between schools, a fully integrated school represents the most inclusive form of sharing within a school.

The IEF would therefore not support an obligation in statute to facilitate and encourage Shared Education as this would perpetuate Northern Ireland's divided education system.

Identify the key barriers for Integrated Education

The High Court's judgment (May 2014) in the judicial review described the Department of Education's 'Needs Model', which is the basis for long-term education planning, as *'inflexible' and provides an 'additional difficulty' impeding the progress of expansion in integrated schools. This creation of an 'additional difficulty' is the opposite of '…facilitating and encouraging (integrated education).' The Court ruled that DE needed to be '…alive to its Article 64 duty at all levels, including the strategic one.'*

Research conducted by Millward Brown Ulster (2003) suggested that almost three quarters of respondents (72%) would choose an integrated school if there was one close to where they live, assuming no negative differential in academic or other standards.

It is the lack of access to integrated education which ensures that only a small percentage of pupils attend integrated schools.

The current overhaul of our education system is putting in place structures that future generations will have to live and deal with. As the most recent opinion polls demonstrate, voters believe that our politicians, instead of seizing the opportunity to shape an education system fit for the 21st century, are side-stepping the issue of desegregating our education system.

Public opinion has repeatedly demonstrated a demand for moving beyond our current segregated education system and towards a united future. The Executive and the Assembly must, at the very least, match the public's vision for an education system of schools attended by pupils from all traditions.

It is unacceptable for education planning not to take into consideration citizen demand or aspiration. And whilst it cannot be left solely to existing education providers or sectors to determine the future of education in an area, equally it should not be left to pioneering parents to have to establish an alternative choice.

The current discourse on shared education assumes that the vast majority of our children will continue to be educated in separate schools for the foreseeable future. By accepting this, political parties move toward education policies that plan for separate development rather than structural change and reform of the separate school system.

Identify the key enablers for Integrated Education

Effective area planning offers the possibility to deliver real change. The process thus far has been rooted in the existing, segregated structure rather than any innovative proposals for a new approach to delivering education. Integrated schools, established through parental demand, demonstrate that it is possible to educate children together without diluting cultural identity. Increasing integrated school places would send out a powerful message that we are creating a truly shared future rather than merely managing the divisions of our past.

Overwhelming Public Support

Integrated education is seen as the most popular of a range of possible options for securing long term peace in Northern Ireland.[4] Integrated education has widespread public backing, with the latest attitudinal survey showing support running at 79% of those expressing an opinion.

An overwhelming 79% of parents with children at school, who expressed an opinion, said they would support a request to transform their child's school to integrated status.

Young people have important opinions and ideas, and may be better equipped to challenge sectarian norms and assist society towards a shared and reconciled future. Moreover, Article 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UK, 1992), confirms that children have the right to say what they think should happen when adults are making decisions that affect them, and have their opinions taken into account.

In April 2014 the IEF commissioned independent polling company LucidTalk to carry out a survey among 16-24 year-olds across Northern Ireland. A representative sample of 1,075 completed the survey and all data results were weighted to reflect gender and community background. More than 83% of those questioned agree that an education system where children of all faiths and none go to the same school would be an important step in combating sectarianism.

Societal Benefits: the Evidence

There is a growing body of evidence of the societal benefits of integrated education. Much research and analysis has been carried out about the segregated nature of schooling.

Research (Stringer et al., 2009, p.252) suggests that pupils of mixed or integrated schools had higher levels of out-of-school contact with members of the 'other' community than children in segregated schools, with pupils reporting '…significantly higher levels of contact with other group members both within and outside school than their segregated counterparts'. Carter (2004) has highlighted sustained and positive contacts between pupils from the two main communities in Northern Ireland through integrated education as crucial in fostering relationships and collaborative learning.

A detailed insight into the cultural and political awareness of 3-6 year olds found there is a rapid increase in the proportions of children beginning to identify themselves with one particular community and to make sectarian comments at the ages of five and six. The fact that these represent the first few years of compulsory schooling is unlikely to be a coincidence. One explanation is likely to be the segregated nature of the school system itself.[5]

A University of Ulster research project into the effects of integrated and segregated schooling in Northern Ireland highlights that sectarianism could be defused if more Catholic and Protestant children were sent to mixed-religion schools.[6]

A Community Relations Council and Equality Commission report highlighted the contribution made by integrated education to '…enabling and promoting continued engagement with children from different backgrounds' and the role of integrated schools in providing opportunities for interaction between individuals from the two main communities in Northern Ireland.[7]

---

4   Lucid Talk Attitudinal Polling 2013

5   Connolly, P, Smith, A. & Kelly, B. (2002) Too young to Notice? The Cultural and Political Awareness of 3-6 years Olds in Northern Ireland. Northern Ireland Community Relations Council

6   Integrated Education, Intergroup Relations, and Political Identities in Northern Ireland, Hayes, B, McAllister, I, Dowds, L (2007)

7   Community Relations Council and Equality Commission, 2010, p. 23

The Northern Ireland Life and Times survey concluded that by separating Protestant and Catholic children, the education system has exacerbated community divisions. It is argued that the separation of children leads to ignorance about the other community and, in the words of Seamus Dunn (1986), fosters 'an atmosphere of mutual distrust and suspicion'. By contrast, the goal of integrated schools is to foster an understanding of both traditions and to overcome negative stereotypes. By encouraging children to understand their historical and religious differences, it is hoped that they will feel less threatened by the other community, and form enduring cross-community relations.[8]

Integrated education can be a fundamental driver for change. It develops pupils' skills and knowledge when they learn together so that they can contribute to an open, diverse and inclusive society. When children learn together, it crucially increases positive attitudes to others, reduces negative stereotypes and encourages cross-community friendships.

Research evidence suggests that integrated schooling has a significant and positive social influence on the lives of those who experience it, most notably in terms of fostering cross-community friendships, reducing prejudicial attitudes and promoting a sense of security in religious, racial, or ethnically diverse environments[9]

The Integrated Education Fund does not want to impose any specific model of education provision on anyone; we act purely in response to parental demand and fully respect the wishes of parents who select various types of schools. The IEF seeks to ensure that all schools are wholly inclusive and provide full equality of opportunity.

It is indisputable that parents will send their children to what they believe are the best schools. They are unlikely to send their children to a school simply because it is integrated, Catholic Maintained or State Controlled, if it isn't considered a good school. Many schools of different types perform to the highest standards and will remain popular choices for parents. All schools aim to do their best for their pupils – the question that must be asked is, would they perform any less well if they were open to, and encouraged to include pupils, teachers and governors from different religious and cultural backgrounds?

Educational Benefits: the Evidence

There has been little research on educational attainment in integrated schools beyond analysis of examination results. The evidence suggests that pupils perform as well academically at GCSE and A-level as pupils from other non-selective schools.

It should be noted that boys in grant maintained integrated schools have a better pass rate of 5 or more GCSE in comparison to other non-selective schools.[10]

Economic Case: the Evidence

Northern Ireland is facing challenging economic times. In addition to public spending demands, a government commissioned report on the *Financial Cost of Division* (Deloitte, 2007) estimated the cost of division in areas such as education, housing, policing and security to be in the region of an extra £1.5 billion spend every year.

The IEF commissioned a scoping paper from Oxford Economics, *Developing the Case for Shared Education*, which called for a thorough debate on new ways to deliver education in Northern Ireland in economically straitened times. The report demonstrated that the NI

---

8   In Search of the Middle Ground: Integrated Education and Northern Ireland Politics. 2006, The Northern Ireland Life and Times survey is carried out annually and documents public opinion on a wide range of social issues. The survey is a joint project of the two Northern Ireland universities and aims to provide an independent source of information on what the public thinks about the social issues of the day.

9   Stringer, 2009, 2000; Montgomery et al., 2003; McGlynn, 2001; Irwin, 1991

10   AgendaNI, Issue 66, p19

Executive cannot continue to fund empty desks while buildings fall into disrepair and staffing budgets are squeezed. In effect, the status quo is unaffordable and unsustainable.

Consider what priorities and actions need to be taken to improve integration

The Department should enhance the curriculum to include the development of skills, structures and relationships that enable schools, pupils and their parents, staff and governors and the wider community to increase their understanding, acceptance and respect for political, cultural and religious difference. This should be embedded through the ethos of schools and be an integral part of the curriculum to ensure all children can contribute to the shared vision of building a united community. The Department should also develop age-appropriate primary and post-primary anti-sectarian resources and ensure that teachers are trained, equipped and supported to deliver these effectively in the classroom.

Integration should inform all future models of social infrastructure; for example the Department for Social Development and Department of Education should establish an interdepartmental strategic approach to mixed housing and integrated education.

All schools in receipt of public funding should have a duty placed on them to be inclusive spaces so that their policies and practice reflect the diverse range of religious and cultural backgrounds that make up pupils, staff and governors across Northern Ireland schools. Moreover, the Department should ring fence funding for integrated education to enable key measurable indicators to be incorporated within the funding formula for schools and other educational institutions. This financial support would recognise the added value of integrated education with particular emphasis in the curriculum and daily routines on understanding, accepting and respecting political, cultural and religious differences. It should be weighed against the quality and the effectiveness of integration provided to ensure continuous progression towards a desegregated, inclusive system. Progress would be monitored by the Education and Training Inspectorate or other objective body as appropriate.

The impact of Integrated Education

The Integrated Education Movement is a parent-led cross-community movement in Northern Ireland with little or no mainstream political backing and yet it has not been without major consequence:

Positive Social Attitudes

For the 28 children in 1981 to 22,000 attending integrated schools in 2013 (and thousands more in between), there has been a measurable impact on social attitudes. Put simply, children who attend an integrated school have more friendships with children from other religions and cultures (Hayes and McAllister, 2009).

A Shared Future

The existence of integrated schools has demonstrated that people from all religious, cultural and social backgrounds can learn and work together. Considering that not one integrated school has been established through government planning or policy, it is a great achievement that 62 schools, educating 22,000 children, now exist in Northern Ireland. But more are needed.

The development of integrated education works as a barometer of a shared society. When full integration in our schools is the norm rather than the exception, we will be truly approaching a shared future.

Challenging Separation

The growth of integrated education to 7% of the school population has had a powerful impact. It has highlighted the fact that the majority of other children in the system are unlikely to experience day to day interaction with those from different religious and cultural traditions. Addressing this has led to initiatives for schools to work more closely together in what is termed 'shared education'. Whilst a fully integrated school represents the most inclusive form of sharing within a school, the fresh drive for shared education between schools has witnessed increased support from government. This suggests a growing political acceptance that our children can and should learn together.

The IEF has had 14 years' experience of funding shared education through our Promoting a Culture of Trust grant programme, and see shared education as a valuable mechanism to bring children together. The aim of the programme is to fund projects in schools to promote the development of skills, structures and relationships that enable schools, pupils and their parents, staff and governors and the wider community to increase their understanding, acceptance and respect for political, cultural and religious differences.

The IEF launched PACT in the year 2000 and is delighted to have been able to support projects in schools of differing levels and management types across Northern Ireland which have delivered and surpassed the stated aim of the programme. Over the past fourteen years, through PACT 1 – 14, £1,034,463 has been awarded in grants for 232 projects in 530 schools, directly involving and benefiting over 13,000 children and young people. However, simply agreeing on the benefits of children learning together, or even putting this into practice through PACT or other projects, does not provide a vision for the future of education. It falls short of showing a community the possible destination of the journey that has begun.

The time has come to think about what could be achieved with full government support for an education system based on children learning together.

In order to achieve a unified, coherent education system, the NI Executive should:

- Carry out a major review of the economic cost of maintaining a segregated education system.

- Place a duty on all schools in receipt of public money to be inclusive spaces; to be open in both school policy and practice to children, staff and governors from all the religious and cultural backgrounds that make up Northern Ireland.

- Ring fence funding for integrated education to support schools in their progress towards integrated education, measured against key indicators, with particular emphasis in the curriculum and daily routines on understanding, accepting and respecting political, cultural and religious differences.

- Develop area based planning which is shaped by the community and which reflects parental choice, community needs, desire for a shared future and fiscal realities

- Establish a single authority for the administration of education.

- Establish a single teacher training system, where teachers of all faiths and none are trained together on the same courses at the same locations.

- Establish a single model of governance for all schools.

- Extend fair employment legislation to the recruitment of teachers.

- Extend the application of Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 to schools.

Papers and research on Integrated Education.

Integration for reconciliation? The impact of integrated schools in Northern Ireland 01/01/2004 A paper presented by Dr Claire McGlynn at the Research Initiative on the Resolution of Ethnic Conflict Conference, "Peace-building after Peace Accords", at the University of Notre Dame, Indiana, September 11-13, 2003.

Moving Barriers: Promoting Learning for Diversity in Initial Teacher Education 01/01/2004 paper presented at The European Conference on Educational Research, University of Hamburg, 17-20 September 2003 by Hagan, M., McGlynn, C.W. and Wylie, K. of Stranmillis University College, Belfast, Northern Ireland

Research probing the influence of friends´ friends on prejudice levels in Northern Ireland. (Paolini, Hewstone, Cairns, Voci) 08/09/2004

Education in Divided Societies, Gallagher, T. (2004), Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan.

Integrated Education in Northern Ireland in the context of Critical Multiculturalism 29/09/2004 Irish Educational Studies Vol 22 No 3 Winter 2003 Claire McGlynn

Moving out of Conflict: Integrated schools in N. Ireland 30/09/2004

Journal of Peace Education Vol1 No 2 Sept 2004 McGlynn; Niens, Cairns and Hewshaw.

As the integrated education movement in Northern Ireland passes its twenty-first anniversary, it is pertinent to explore the legacy of mixed Catholic and Protestant schooling. This paper summarises the findings of different studies regarding the impact of integrated education in Northern Ireland on social identity, intergroup attitudes and forgiveness and reconciliation. The research is discussed in relation to its implications for the theory and practice of integrated education in Northern Ireland and also for other societies with a legacy of ethnopolitical conflict. It proposes that integrated education in Northern Ireland impacts positively on identity, outgroup attitudes, forgiveness and reconciliation, providing hope and encouragement for co-education strategies in other countries that have suffered from prolonged conflict. Despite a number of challenges, it is clear from the research presented here that integrated education holds great potential both for building social cohesion and for promoting forgiveness and reconciliation.

Integration in Practice: Alison Montgomery, Grace Frazer, Claire McGlynn, Tony Gallagher and Alan Smith:2003 Integrated Education in N.Ireland 08/10/2004 UNESCO

The Right to Education Tomasevski, T. (2003), , Report submitted by Special Rapporteur to the Fifty-ninth session of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights.

Transformation: Julie McGonigle, Tony Gallagher and Alan Smith Integrated Education in N. Ireland 2003 UNESCO

In Search of the Middle Ground: Integrated Education and Northern Ireland Politics Bernadette C. Hayes, University of Aberdeen Ian McAllister, Australian National University

Lizanne Dowds, ARK Education is often seen as a means of achieving social change. Underlying this view is contact theory, which argues that increased contact between social groups will serve to reduce prejudicial attitudes and alleviate racial and ethnic divisions. A recent study, undertaken by Bernadette C. Hayes, Ian McAllister and Lizanne Dowds, tests and extends these propositions by examining the long-term impact of segregated and integrated education on political identities and attitudes. Using a pooled sample of surveys conducted on the adult population in Northern Ireland between 1998 and 2003, it addresses, for the first time, the question of whether or not experiencing a religiously integrated education has a significant effect on the political outlooks of Protestants and Catholics within this society. The results suggest that attendance at a religiously integrated school – either one formally constituted as integrated or a religious school incorporating a proportion from

the opposite religion – has positive long-term benefits in promoting a less sectarian stance on national identity and constitutional preferences (for a comprehensive account of the study and a detailed discussion of its findings see:

- Integrated education can and does have an impact on the outlooks of pupils who attend them.

- The effects of integrated education extend into later life.

- As the numbers experiencing integrated education grows, there is the potential to create a new common ground in Northern Ireland politics.

The management of pupil difference in Catholic-Protestant and Palestinian- Jewish integrated education in Northern Ireland and Israel

Claire McGlynn and Zvi Bekerman Queen's University, Belfast, UK; Hebrew University, Jerusalem, Israel Compare Vol. 37, No. 5, October 2007, pp. 689–705

This paper considers issues related to integration in education, specifically those related to the integration of ethnic/religious populations in conflict. The case study we will use is the educating together of Catholic and Protestant children and Palestinian and Jewish children in two troubled societies, Northern Ireland and Israel, where children are normally kept segregated within the education system. Using a multi-theoretical approach the paper presents data collected in a parallel study of principals, policy makers and stakeholders in the two contexts. Whilst there are striking similarities between integrated education in Northern Ireland and Israel there are also clear differences around the management of pupil diversity which are critically teased out in the paper. It is argued that a cross-fertilization of theoretical perspectives is necessary both to analyse integrated school settings and to support those involved in these ventures.

Education for Peace in Integrated Schools: A Priority for Northern Ireland? Claire McGlynn 29/09/2004: Child care in Practice Vol 10 No 2 April 2004

Carfax

Although violence in Northern Ireland has been "neither halted or prevented" (Tomasevski, 2003a, p. 7), few would deny that the scale of the conflict has been reduced. This paper argues that a vital purpose of education in Northern Ireland should be peacebuilding and the promotion of social cohesion. In particular, the paper looks at the lessons that can be learned from integrated education by societies moving out of conflict. As part of a larger study of the impact of integrated (mixed Catholic and Protestant) education, former and current Principals of the two longest established post-primary (for children aged 11–18) integrated colleges were questioned about the policies and practice employed by their schools with regards to promoting respect for diversity, dealing with cultural symbols and affirming or challenging identity. The potential of integrated education to promote tolerance and understanding is discussed. This paper concludes that the needs of children and society for reconciliation through integrated schooling should perhaps take preference over the rights of parents to segregated education.

Rhetoric and reality: are integrated schools in Northern Ireland really making a difference? Claire McGlynn Irish Educational Studies Vol. 26, No. 3, September 2007, pp. 271_287

This article explores perspectives on the current contribution of integrated schools to society in Northern Ireland and asks whether there is a mismatch between what some expect from the schools and what they may be able to provide. It suggests that integrated education may for some be a magic panacea, whilst those leading the sector see the benefits of integrated education as emerging over a much longer and more realistic timeframe. Based on a series of interviews with principals and with other leaders, this article explores how integrated schools balance the practice and evaluation of integration with other conflicting priorities. It questions the extent to which the schools show variation and argues that greater coherence within the integrated sector might be helpful in the current climate.

Integrated and Faith-Based Schooling in Northern Ireland

Claire McGlynn *The Irish Journal of Education*, 2005, *xxxvi*, pp. 49-62

Issues are explored relating to the diversity of schooling provision in Northern Ireland in the context of the debate around faith-based schooling in England and elsewhere. The benefits to individuals from a religious point of view are off-set against any potential impact on social cohesion. Integrated schools as models for shared education are considered, as are innovative methods of co-management that may emerge in the future. In the context of a fragile society emerging from conflict and yet apparently more polarized than ever, it is argued that choices inevitably have consequences and that the long-term price of separate schooling may be further division.

Leading integrated schools: a study of the multicultural perspectives of Northern Irish principals Claire McGlynn* *Journal of Peace Education* Vol. 5, No. 1, March 2008, 3–16

This article is concerned with the sustained peace education initiative of integrated schooling and in particular with leadership responses to cultural diversity. Using a case study group of principals of integrated (mixed Catholic, Protestant and other) schools in Northern Ireland, the author explores how principals perceive and lead their visions of integrated education. A combined framework of multicultural and school leadership theory is employed to analyse the findings. The perceptions of the principals reported are consistent with liberal interpretations of multiculturalism, although there is also evidence of a more pluralist perspective. Core liberal values appear to be central to the leadership style of these principals, in line with values-led contingency models of leadership. The article suggests that a sole emphasis on common humanity is an inadequate approach to peace education. It tentatively suggests a relationship between leadership styles and approaches to multiculturalism, and argues that a synthesis of multicultural and leadership theory can usefully guide the development of peace education leadership.

Millward Brown Ulster (2001), Public Opinion Survey: Integrated Education in Northern Ireland, Belfast: MBU.

Millward Brown Ulster (2002), Public Opinion Survey: Integrated Education in Northern Ireland, Belfast: MBU.

Millward Brown Ulster (2003), Public Opinion Survey: Integrated Education in Northern Ireland, Belfast: MBU.

Millward Brown Ulster (2006), Public Opinion Survey: Integrated Education in Northern Ireland, Belfast: MBU.

International Fund for Ireland

Background Paper

Date: 18th June 2014

Subject: Background on the Fund's investment in Shared Education

1.0   Summary

In Northern Ireland, 93% of pupils are educated in separate schools. There many different types of school, each proud of their identity and ethos and which parents and communities value and care about passionately.

The accepted system of having children educated separately runs counter to the International Fund for Ireland's objective of bringing people and communities together and since 2007, shared education models, sponsored by the Fund and Atlantic Philanthropies, have brought together schools from different sectors in strategic partnerships.

These models have sought to make the case for sharing and provide a diverse range of approaches that enhance academic and personal development and good relations between communities.

In building a more cohesive society, shared education and integrated education are different routes to the same objective. However, communities have genuine concerns about the potential loss of school identity and ethos should they merge into or be replaced by new integrated schools.

The Fund's investment has made the case for shared education and outlined its potential to be a practical and achievable way for all schools to retain identities, respect difference and build relationships between local communities.

These models of shared education have demonstrated that schools can find and develop innovative solutions to deliver education on a cross-sectoral basis. They provide effective ways of breaking down the barriers arising from our historic conflict by providing a range of opportunities for young people to learn together and reach the highest possible standards of educational achievement.

In October 2013, the Northern Ireland Education Minister, John O'Dowd MLA, recognised the Fund's contribution and signalled his intention to provide a legislative requirement for sharing and called for "sharing to become the accepted reality at every stage of education, from early years to post-graduate study" (Address to the Northern Ireland Assembly, 2nd October 2013).

2.0   About Shared Education

Shared Education refers to schools from different sectors working together in a sustained process ranging from two or more schools making shared use of specialist facilities, through to co-ordinated timetabling and pupils taking classes across a network of schools. It looks

to work within the current system to promote opportunities for sustained curriculum based contact between pupils across the sectoral divide.

The focus of Shared Education is delivering core curriculum activities where teachers and pupils work together across schools to achieve higher quality educational experiences.

3.0 The Fund's contribution to Shared Education

The Fund has invested significantly in shared education. Since 2007, it has funded 22 projects (£18m) to facilitate reconciliation for a shared future through the medium of education in order to:

■ promote shared education by linking schools representative of the two communities;

■ build on community relations within and between schools;

■ support cultural outreach amongst young people representative of the differing communities/traditions; and

■ address strategic gaps in achieving reconciliation through a cross community, cross-border approach through education and the related services sector.

Some 19 of these projects constitute the Sharing in Education Programme (SiEP) and the remaining three form the Shared Education Programme (SEP) operated through: Queen's University, the Northern Eastern Education and Library Board (PIEE), and the Fermanagh Trust. The latter three projects are co-funded with Atlantic Philanthropies.

The strategic relationship between the Fund and AP has led to a total investment of more than £24 million (Fund £18m and AP £6m) in 22 shared education projects.

4.0 Achievements

Over six years, the Fund in collaboration with AP has made the case for shared education and achieved much.

(a) Outworkings from the Sharing in Education Programme provided a proven and credible evidence base for discussions between educationalists and government which helped shape commitments in the Programme for Government (PfG: 2011-2015) for shared education, viz:

    (i) Establish a Ministerial Advisory Group to explore and bring forward recommendations to the Minister of Education to advance shared education.

    (ii) To ensure all children have the opportunity to participate in shared education programmes by 2015.

    (iii) To substantially increase the number of schools sharing facilities by 2015.

(b) A June 2013 announcement by the First and Deputy First Ministers (Together: Building a United Community) stated that work on 10+ shared education campuses will commence within the next five years, offering the potential for shared classes and subjects and also adding significant momentum to the PfG commitments. They also confirmed plans to provide more opportunities for sharing within teacher training to build on initiatives underway involving the two teacher training colleges. SiEP has already made considerable gains in this area.

(c) In May 2013 the Ministerial Advisory Group's (MAG) final repot referenced the 'laudable' examples from SiEP as it put forward 17 recommendations on advancing shared education which the Fund supports. Three of which, if implemented, will move shared education from an external intervention to the mainstream, viz:

    (i) Statutory duty on the Department of Education and the new Education and Skills Authority to encourage and facilitate shared education.

(ii)   A central unit within ESA to take lead responsibility on developing and driving forward a strategy on advancing shared education.

(iii)   A shared education premium is incorporated as part of the revised funding formula for schools and other educational institutions.

(d)   On 22nd October 2013, the Northern Ireland Education Minister, John O'Dowd MLA, responded to the Ministerial Advisory Group recommendations and outlined the way forward for shared education.

The Minister signalled his general acceptance to proposals around the mainstreaming of funding for shared education and committed to bring forward a statutory definition of shared education in the Education Bill and provisions to ensure the Education and Skills Authority would have a duty to encourage and facilitate it.

(e)   The Minister said: "Shared education is rolling out as we speak. I would like to see a legal definition put in place through the ESA Bill. However, if the ESA continues to be delayed, I will consider bringing forward legislation to introduce a definition of shared education separate from the ESA Bill, as I place such importance on it."

(f)   Speaking at the Sharing in Education Programme Final Conference in November 2013, the Minister outlined the challenges to ending separation in schools and said:

"[SIEP] projects represented at today's conference, supported by the Fund, have together addressed many of these challenges. Together they provide real and tangible evidence to support the case for Shared Education.

"Hence the education aspects of the Fund's work is of significant importance as we in government seek to advance shared education. I commend the Fund on their vision to invest in this work and one which has made a real, and lasting, difference to the young people who have undoubtedly benefited."

5.0   Conclusion

The Fund has played a key role in moving shared education from an embryonic working concept towards maturity and the point where it can become a mainstreamed aspect within the Department of Education and a part of education delivery in every classroom in Northern Ireland.

Kilbride Central Primary School

Kilbride Central Primary School
56 Moyra Rd, Doagh, Ballyclare,
County Antrim, BT39 0SQ

Pricipal: Mr C. Currie BEd. Hons. MEd. P. Q.H. (NI)
Tel: 028 9334 0321

Evidence for Education Committee Re: Shared Education

A Perspective from Kilbride Central Primary School, Ballyclare, Co. Antrim

This document was prepared following a request from the Stormont Education Committee as part of their inquiry into Shared/Integrated Education.

Introduction and Background

This evidence has been submitted on behalf of our school and Board of Governors by Mr C. Currie, Principal of Kilbride Central Primary School.

I am 33 years old and was appointed in September 2012 so I am now entering my third year of headship. I previously had a successful teaching career for 8 years in Loanends Primary School, Nutts Corner which included achieving a Masters in Education and a Professional Qualification of Headship (PQH). I am pleased with what I have achieved and consider myself to have a very neutral and rounded view of education (and all its foibles!) in Northern Ireland.

As a child of a Protestant mother and a Roman Catholic father (both from North Belfast) I was brought up in the controlled sector of education in Bangor but was always taught to maintain a balanced opinion and look at things from all angles before forming an opinion. I continue to do this now and consider it one of my strengths as a school leader.

The following paragraphs are my responses to the issues being debated by the Committee:

1.0   Review the nature and definition of Shared Education and Integrated Education across all educational phases – including consideration of the need for a formal statutory definition and an obligation in statute to facilitate and encourage Shared Education;

1.1   As the above has two clear aims I will address them one at a time…

1.2   As Shared Education and Integrated Education has always been the 'add on' or treated like a luxurious afterthought if one had the political foresight to see its potential since its inception some years ago I think, given the current political deadlock and fact that the country appears to be going backwards rather than forwards, this is an excellent time to review, promote and formalise this sector of education- even better if it expands.

1.3   There can only be good things that come from a legislative requirement to facilitate and encourage Shared Education. At the moment it is too easy for political parties to 'back their own horses' when it comes to education which results in an ever-widening gap between the maintained and controlled sectors. Nobody seems to take ownership of the integrated sector. The result? Some of the most educationally sound, popular and over-subscribed schools/ colleges in the country eg. Slemish, Lagan, Bangor Central, Ulidia etc. filled in the large part by rational-thinking masses who value a good education over political polarisation. The more this is forced upon extremist parties like the PUP/DUP and Sinn Fein, the better education will become and the better future we will have for our country.

2.0   Identify the key barriers and enablers for Shared Education and Integrated Education;

2.1   Unfortunately there are more barriers than enablers however the enablers I can think of are the many, many people (the silent majority of the population I expect) who would back and support the philosophy. I also expect that the majority of professionals would also be behind it.

2.2   Where do we begin with the barriers? The disastrous approach by taken by successive Sinn Fein Education Ministers who appear to have pursued their own political agendas under the guise of 'Putting Pupils First'. It has been one calamity after another, I expect you don't need me to list them. All they have succeeded in doing is segregating the education system further and destroying the morale of teachers everywhere. Whilst we have two large political parties with completely opposite viewpoints and unwilling to compromise (unless a shady deal for mutual benefit has been done in a back room somewhere), it is unlikely the aims of this debate will ever be realised.

2.3   I would absolutely love to promote CRED (Community Relations, Equality and Diversity) and market ourselves as a 'Voluntarily Integrated' School, especially in an area like Ballyclare where pain runs deep, however myself and the staff have been so overwhelmed with changes to the curriculum (indeed some have been necessary) and getting our heads around successive failed initiatives like Computer Based Assessment and Assessment of the Cross Curricular Skills amongst the many other initiatives that constantly get fired at us that we simply don't have enough hours in the day. Whilst schools continue to be judged and inspected on failing measures of assessment these will always be the priority. As a person who has to bridge the gap between educating young children to the best of my ability and a system which has so many rotten fingers in its pie I can confirm that he whole thing is an absolute mess; it needs knocked down and started again. We are handcuffed by a failing system and until these are removed Shared Education will forever seem like an impossible dream.

2.4   Even as I sit and write this on a wet morning in July I still have no idea what direction assessment will go this incoming September. In the last two months I have received communications from my union that Cross Curricular Assessment (which shapes my whole School Development direction) is to be shelved; the same week I received a letter from the Minister telling me that it is clearly not working but that it will NOT be shelved. Where do we go?

3.0   Identify and analyse alternative approaches and models of good practice in other jurisdictions in terms of policy interventions and programmes;

3.1   I can't comment on any detailed analysis of the sector having never worked in it. My only experience has been gained through working alongside Integrated Colleges as a feeder primary and additional experiences from parents which have always been very positive.

4.0   Consider what priorities and actions need to be taken to improve sharing and integration – including the effectiveness of the relevant parts of the CRED policy; the need to engage more effectively with parents/carers; and the role of Special Schools;

4.1   I see the solution here as very simple: remove the current failing barriers in our system such as Cross Curricular Assessment; allow schools to use their existing and effective individual approaches to assessment; inspect schools on an individual basis rather than using a one-size-fits-all approach; this will free up time for schools to pursue CRED much more freely and invest in paired/shared projects across the sectors. I don't even see much expense involved!

5.0   Report to the Assembly on its findings and recommendations by Spring 2015.

5.1   I am happy for any of this information to be used by the Assembly and am happy to take part in any kind of further consultation to support my views or elaborate on them. I would actually be quite keen to do this as it's genuinely something I believe is necessary for the future of this country and whatever children/grandchildren I am fortunate enough to eventually have.

Best Regards,

Christopher Currie
Principal
Kilbride Central Primary School

Knox and Borooah 1

Briefing Notes for Education Committee
15th October 2014
Colin Knox and Vani Borooah

Definitions

Difference between shared education and integrated education:

Shared Education

Shared Education encompasses a number of different types of sharing, from projects and shared classes through to shared education models, such as those defined in the Bain report (eg: Federations/Confederations; Shared Campus and Shared Faith schools).
Under Article 64 (1) of The Education Reform (NI) Order 1989, integrated education is defined as "the education together at school of Protestant and Roman Catholic pupils (Minister of Education)

The Terms of Reference for the Ministerial Advisory Group on Advancing Shared Education defined Shared Education as:

> The organisation and delivery of education so that it: meets the needs of, and provides for the education together of, learners from all Section 75 categories and socio-economic status; involves schools and other education providers of differing ownership, sectoral identity and ethos, management type or governance arrangements; and delivers educational benefits to learners, promotes the efficient and effective use of resources, and promotes equality of opportunity, good relations, equality of identity, respect for diversity and community cohesion (MAG Report)

By its nature, Shared Education involves _more than one_ school type. This view has been endorsed by the Ministerial Advisory Group, which further refined the definition to "...involves _two or more schools_ or other education institutions from different sectors working in collaboration..." (Minister for Education)

Integrated education

Integrated schools bring together children and adults from Catholic, Protestant and other backgrounds in each school. The schools strive to achieve a religious balance of pupils, teachers and governors and acknowledge and respect the cultural diversity they represent (IEF)

Integrated Education brings children and staff from Catholic and Protestant traditions, as well as those of other faiths, or none, together in one school(NICIE)

Under Article 64 (1) of The Education Reform (NI) Order 1989, integrated education is defined as "the education together at school of Protestant and Roman Catholic pupils" (legal definition).

1

Integrated education brings children and staff from Catholic and Protestant traditions, as well as those of other faiths, or none, together in one school. Integrated Schools ensure that children from diverse backgrounds are educated together (DE website)

There are two types of integrated schools. New planned integrated schools are *Grant-Maintained Integrated (GMI) Schools* which are funded directly by the Department of Education under the arrangements set out in the Common Funding Scheme for the Local Management of Schools. Existing controlled schools which transform to integrated schools are *Controlled Integrated* and managed by the Education and Library Boards through the Boards of Governors.

Justice Tracey decision

"Mr Justice Treacy has confirmed the situation as to what constitutes an integrated education. He has made it clear that integrated education is a stand-alone concept:

"the education together at school of Protestant and Roman Catholic pupils."

He further confirms that integrated schooling as defined cannot be delivered by schools with a predominantly Catholic or Protestant ethos. The article 64 duty therefore relates to integrated schools only — schools that are properly constituted to achieve an equal balance in worship, celebration and exposure to all faiths, with a board that is charged to strive in its ethos to achieve those aims. Our motion therefore calls on the Minister to accept and act on the duty under article 64 to facilitate and encourage, not just to pay lip service, and to accept that integrated education in the meaning of the 1989 Order has now been legally defined as a concept envisaging the education of pupils together in the same school, rather than in a school with a predominantly Catholic or Protestant ethos" (Trevor Lunn, Alliance Party).

Under Article 64 (1) of the Education Reform (NI) Order 1989, the Department of Education has a statutory duty to encourage and facilitate the development of integrated education. To help encourage and facilitate the development of integrated education, the Department of Education provides annual funding to help schools with the process of transformation to integrated status. This supports schools in the initial stages of the transformation process and with the employment of a teacher, from the minority community in the school, to assist with religious education. The budget available for 2014/15 is £191k. In addition, Article 64 (2) of the 1989 Order allows the Department to pay grants to a body which has as an objective the encouragement or promotion of integrated education. In fulfilment of this legislation, the Department of Education provides funding annually to the NI Council for Integrated Education (NICIE). Funding of £665k has been allocated for 2014/15.

2

The Extent of Segregation

Education provision demonstrates the extent of division between the communities. As the Department of Education statistics (2013/14) show:

- In the primary sector: 6.2% of Catholics attend controlled primary schools; 1% of Protestants attend maintained primary schools; and 5.7% of primary school children attend integrated schools.

- In the secondary (non-grammar) sector: 2.8% of Catholics attend controlled secondary schools; 1% of Protestants attend maintained secondary schools; and 14.9% of secondary (non-grammar) pupils attend integrated schools.

- In the secondary (grammar) sector: 8.3% of Catholics attend controlled grammar schools; and 0.9% of Protestants attend voluntary Catholic grammar schools.

- Overall, 6.7% of primary and post-primary pupils attend integrated schools.

Catholics are therefore much more willing to go to schools in the controlled sector than Protestants are to attend maintained schools. The greatest movement by Catholics is into controlled grammar schools. Many young people in Northern Ireland never experience cross community education until they attend university.

Demand for integrated education

Research evidence on the impact of integrated education tends to focus on its reconciliation and societal benefits in the divided society that is Northern Ireland. These benefits accrue from intergroup contact which can positively influence social attitudes about 'the other' community and create a more plural society (McGlynn, 2011; Stringer et al, 2009; Hayes et al, 2007). The evidence is summarised by Stringer et al (2000:11) when they conclude that meaningful contact with peers from the other religion in school is more likely to make them 'more accommodating to issues that have divided the two religious groups' in their adult life.

Education Minister said:

"In any year, the popularity of a school sector is most appropriately measured by the number of parents expressing a first preference on the application/transfer form for schools in that sector.

Within the integrated sector, the number of places available in both the primary and post-primary sectors slightly exceeds demand, although there may be pressure in particular areas, or for particular schools, due to parental preference.

Where pressure on places exists at a school, the Department will consider any request from a school for a temporary increase to its admission and/or enrolment numbers. Temporary

3

1111

variations will not be granted if there are other schools of the same sector within reasonable travelling distance with spaces available. Each case is considered on its own merits.

In the longer term, the Area Planning process aims to assess the demand for places in every sector based on robust and verifiable evidence. Where there is identified need the school managing authority will consider that need in the overall context of the area plan and if appropriate bring forward a Development Proposal to increase the number of places.
In addition, any existing grant-aided school, with the exception of a special school, may consider transforming to integrated status."

4

Table 1: Summary statistics: integrated schools 2013/14

	School type	Protestant	Catholic	Other religions/religion not known (includes Christians and non-Christians)	Minority community %	Unfilled places	Total pupils	First preference applications 2013/14	Approved admissions number
Primary Schools (Y1-7)	Controlled Integrated (n = 19)	1,502 (42%)	1,050 (30%)	1,003 (28%)	30%	718	3,555	593	613
	Grant maintained integrated (n = 23)	1,805 (33%)	2,356 (42%)	1,384 (n = 25%)	33%	210	5,545	855	822
Post primary schools	Controlled integrated (n=5)	1,681 (66%)	416 (16%)	460 (n=18%)	16%	533	2,557	347	560
	Grant maintained integrated (n = 15)	4,048 (42%)	3,910 (41%)	1,591 (n = 17%)	41%	511	9,549	1435	1556
TOTAL	**62 integrated schools**	**9,036 (42.6%)**	**7,732 (36.5%)**	**4,438 (20.9%)**	**36.5%**	**1,972 (8.5%)**	**21,206**	**3,230**	**3,551**

Notes:

1. In addition to the above numbers there are 539 pupils in integrated nursery and reception classes making a grand total of 21,745 pupils in integrated schools from an overall school population of 326,205 pupils. Integrated education therefore represents 6.7% of the overall school population.

2. There are questions asked about the classification of pupils attending integrated schools. Critics argue the high numbers of pupils recorded as 'other religions/religion not known' is an attempt by the sector to comply with government requirements that there should be 30% pupils from the minority community. Notwithstanding, the above statistics show that post-primary controlled integrated schools are clearly not meeting this target. See also Annex 1 (table 8) which shows some voluntary and controlled grammar schools which have a good mix of children from different community backgrounds.

3. Table 1 above shows that 8.5% of approved enrolments to integrated schools remain unfilled. Shaded rows in the tables 7 - 9 (in Appendix 1) highlight those schools where there are no unfilled places (7 primary schools and 7 post-primary schools).

4. In the overall integrated sector, there were 3,230 first preference applications for 3,551 approved places – an excess of 321 places. The sector is therefore 9% undersubscribed.

5

1113

Tables 2 below show the top/bottom 3 primary and post-primary schools which were over and under subscribed respectively in 2013/14 to the largest extent are as follows:

Table 2: Extent of over and over subscription in Integrated Education Sector 2013/14

Primary School	First preference applications	Approved admissions number	Over (+) or undersubscribed(-)
Forge Integrated Primary School	60	36	+24
Glencraig Integrated Primary School	45	30	+15
Bridge Integrated Primary School	72	58	+14
Saints & Scholars Integrated Primary School	28	55	-27
Rathenraw Integrated Primary School	9	30	-21
Glengormley Integrated Primary School	46	60	-14

Post Primary School	First preference applications	Approved admissions number	Over (+) or undersubscribed(-)
Slemish College[1]	161	120	+41
Lagan College[1]	236	200	+36
Drumagh College	117	96	+21
Malone Integrated College	45	130	-85
Crumlin Integrated College	11	75	-64
Fort Hill College	115	160	-45

---

[1] Please note that Slemish College and Lagan College are selective schools which may skew the results here.

6

Performance of Integrated Education

The data on the performance of integrated schools (see Figure 1 below) show that Controlled Integrated schools are the poorest performing in the post primary sector, if judged by the educational outcomes of pupils attaining 5 or more GCSEs including English and Maths. Grant Maintained integrated schools perform at a level comparable to non-selective secondary schools which, in turn, achieve significantly lower results than controlled or voluntary Catholic grammar schools.

Figure 1: School performance by management type

5+ GCSEs with English and Maths

	Controlled non grammar	Catholic Maintained non-grammar	Controlled Integrated	Grant maintained integrated	Protestant grammar	Catholic grammar	All Schools
Number	49	67	5	15	37	30	204
2012/13	33.2	41	28.5	40.6	93.9	94.9	59.5

7
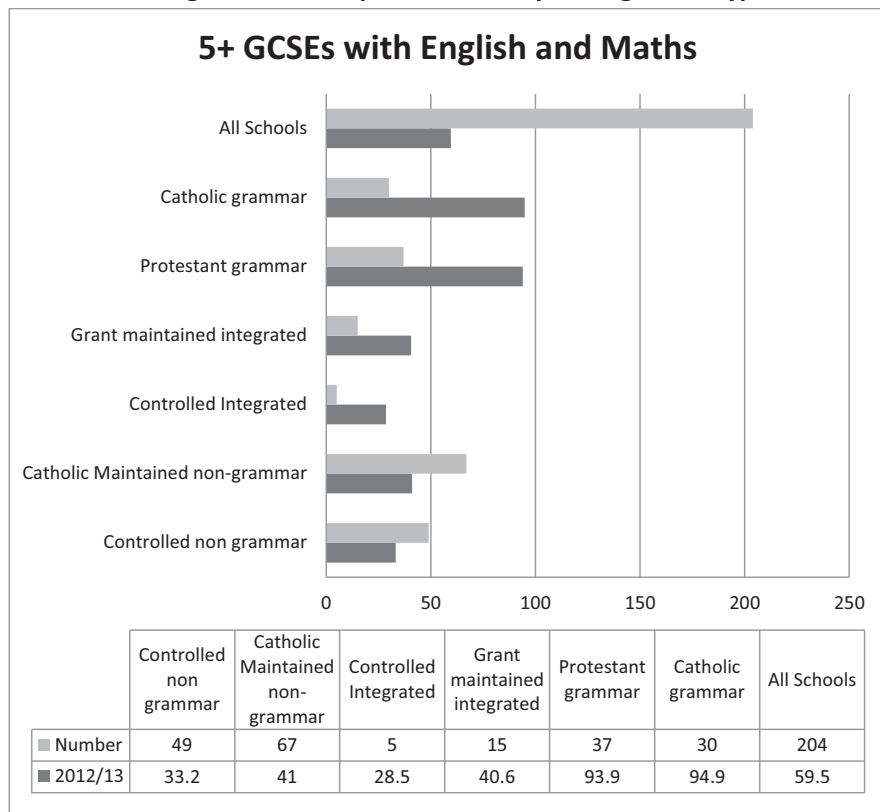
Figure 2: Non-Grammar School performance by management type, FSM and non-FSM Pupils, 2012/13[*]

5+ GCSEs with English and Maths

	Controlled non grammar	Catholic Maintained non-grammar	Controlled Integrated	Grant maintained integrated (ex. Slemish, Drumagh, & Lagan)	Grant maintained integrated	All Secondary Schools
■ Number	49	67	5	12	15	137
■ FSM	11.9	23.2	11.9	16.3	19.3	19.1
■ Non-FSM	37.7	47.6	32.5	41.2	45.6	42.8
■ All	33.2	41	28.5	35.9	40.6	37.5
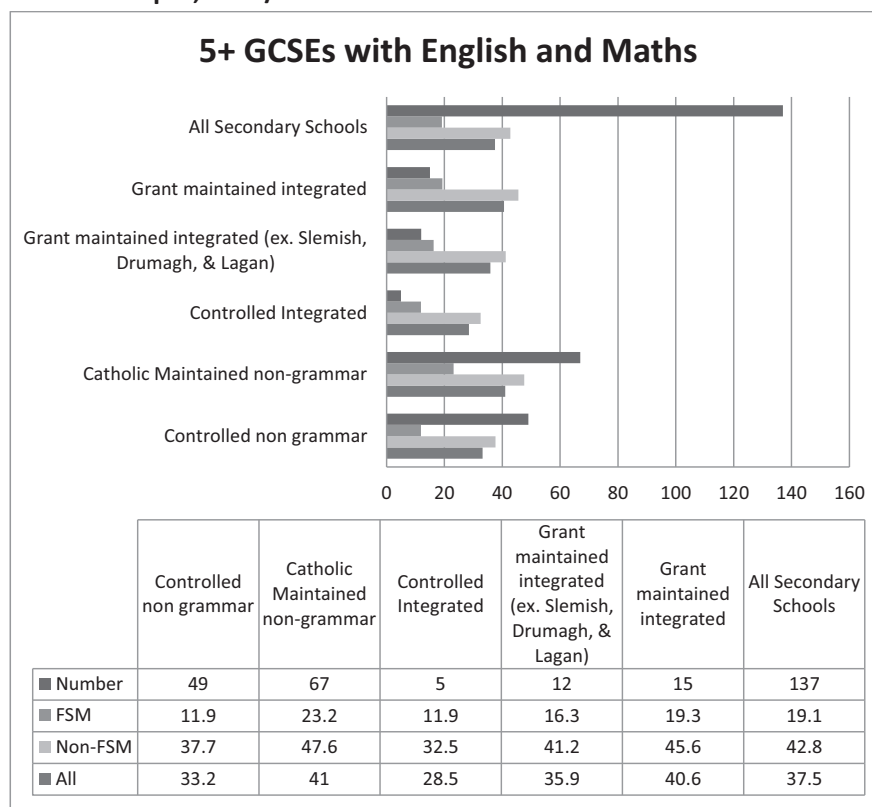
[*]Note there was one 'other maintained school'.

8

1116

Figure 3: Grammar School performance by Catholic Protestant, FSM and non-FSM Pupils, 2012/13[*]

5+ GCSEs with English and Maths

	Catholic Grammars	Protestant Grammar	All Grammar Schools
■ Number	30	37	67
■ FSM	88	80.5	85.4
■ Non-FSM	95.6	94.4	94.9
■ All	94.9	93.9	94.3
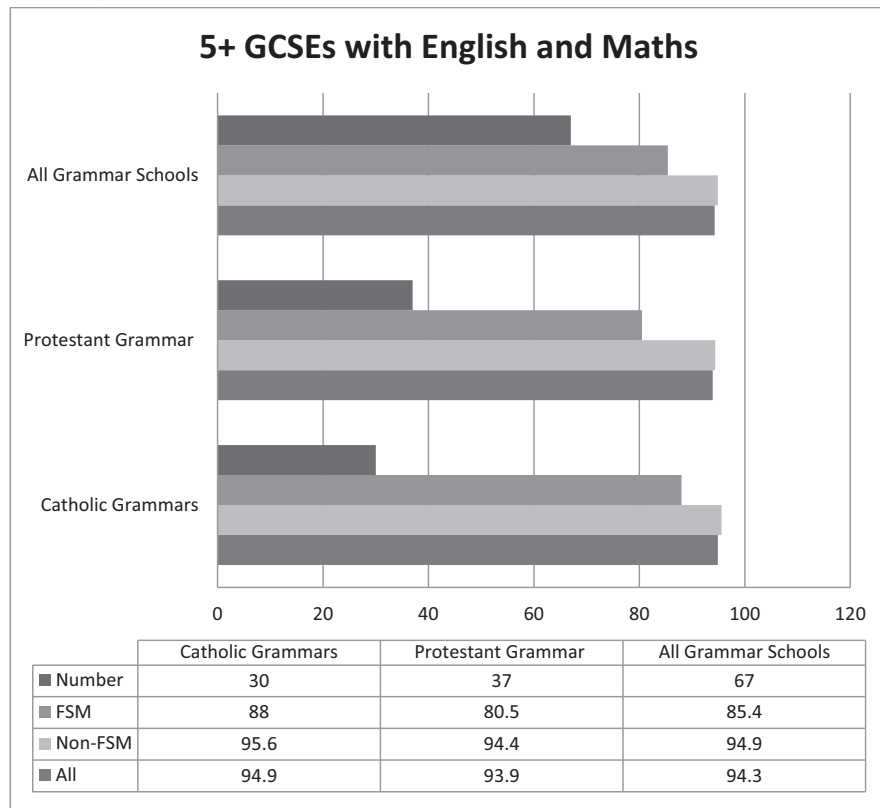
Note that four Catholic grammars and 14 Protestant grammars did not have *any* Year 12 FSM pupils

9

1117

Figure 4: Percentage of FSM Pupils in Total Enrolment by Management Type, non-Grammar Post-Primary Schools, 2013
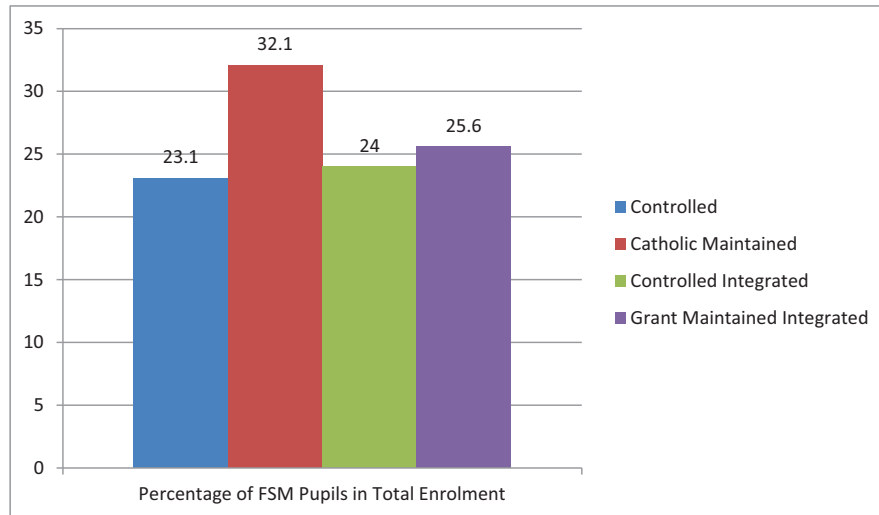
Figure 5: Percentage of FSM Pupils in Total Enrolment by Grammar School 2013

10
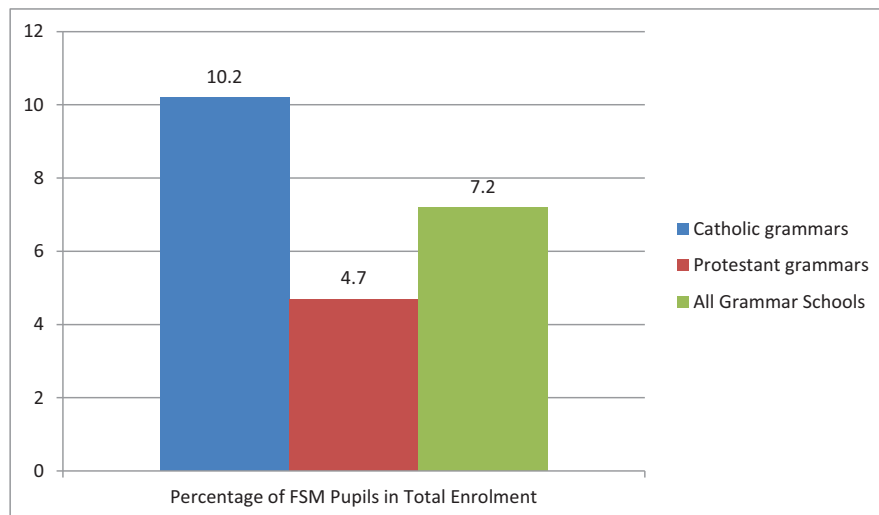
Contrary to the prior belief that in every school the performance of *FSM* pupils would not be as good as that of *NFSM* pupils, there were 22 (out of 204) post-primary schools in Northern Ireland in which the performance of *FSM* pupils, with respect to 5+ A*-C (E&M) GCSE passes, was *at least as good as* that of *NFSM* pupils. These 22 schools are identified in Table 3, below and, of these 22 schools, 18 were grammar schools (10 Protestant, eight Catholic); two were maintained; and two were grant maintained integrated. The 10 Protestant grammars had a substantially lower proportion of year 12 FSM pupils than the eight Catholic grammars (5.2% versus 10.5%).

Table 3: Schools in which NFSM pupils were outperformed by FSM pupils, 2013

School	Town	Type	% with 5+ A*-C (E&M)		Year 12 numbers	
			NFSM	FSM	FSM	Total
Strangford Integrated College	Carrowdore	GMI	32	45	11	91
Cambridge House Grammar School	Ballymena	Grammar (P)	90	100	10	158
Belfast High School	Newtownabbey	Grammar (P)	92	100	6	139
Rainey Endowed School	Magherafelt	Grammar (P)	94	100	6	101
The Royal School Dungannon	Dungannon	Grammar (P)	95	100	7	100
Malone Integrated College	Belfast	GMI	18	22	36	133
Lurgan College	Craigavon	Grammar (P)	95	100	8	119
Grosvenor Grammar School	Belfast	Grammar (P)	96	100	6	163
Portadown College	Craigavon	Grammar (P)	97	100	6	203
Mount Lourdes Grammar School	Enniskillen	Grammar (C)	90	92	13	91
St Dominic's High School	Belfast	Grammar (C)	98	100	15	142
St Joseph's College	Dungannon	Maintained	21	24	34	94
Banbridge Academy	Banbridge	Grammar (P)	98	100	7	194
Ballymena Academy	Ballymena	Grammar (P)	98	100	7	181
Collegiate Grammar School	Enniskillen	Grammar (P)	99	100	5	75
Loreto Grammar School	Omagh	Grammar (C)	99	100	16	123
St Mary's High School	Downpatrick	Maintained	57	58	12	73
St Louis Grammar School	Ballymena	Grammar (C)	99	100	8	146
Lumen Christi College	Londonderry	Grammar (C)	100	100	7	124
St Joseph's Grammar School	Dungannon	Grammar (C)	100	100	10	76
Our Lady's Grammar School	Newry	Grammar (C)	100	100	10	127
St Mary's Grammar School	Magherafelt	Grammar (C)	100	100	16	165

11

1119

There were 23 post-primary schools in which the performance of *FSM* pupils, though worse that of *NFSM* pupils with respect to 5+ A[*]-C (E&M) GCSE passes, was within 10% of the latter's performance. These are shown in Table 4 and they comprise 17 Catholic schools: 11 Catholic grammars and six Catholic maintained schools. Of the remaining six schools, 5 were Protestant grammars and one was a grant maintained integrated college.

Table 4: Schools in which FSM pupils' performance was less than 10% of NFSM performance, 2013

School	Town	Type	Yr 12 FSM	Yr 12 total	PGR
St John's High School	Omagh	Maintained	12	32	1
St Patrick's Grammar School	Armagh	Grammar (C)	12	116	1
St Paul's High School	Newry	Maintained	41	251	1
St Michael's Grammar	Craigavon	Grammar (C)	16	144	1
St Rose's High School	Belfast	Maintained	30	68	5
St Comhghall's College	Enniskillen	Maintained	19	59	3
St Brigid's College	Londonderry	Maintained	78	127	8
Slemish College	Ballymena	GMI	15	125	5
Regent House School	Newtownards	Grammar (P)	9	218	3
St Malachy's College	Belfast	Grammar (C)	15	160	3
St Columb's College	Londonderry	Grammar (C)	37	208	4
Limavady Grammar School	Limavady	Grammar (P)	16	139	4
St Colman's High School	Ballynahinch	Maintained	16	62	9
St Michael's College	Enniskillen	Grammar (C)	7	97	5
Glenlola Collegiate	Bangor	Grammar (P)	13	163	4
Dominican College	Portstewart	Grammar (C)	9	74	5
St Patrick's Academy	Dungannon	Grammar (C)	22	200	5
St Patrick's Grammar School	Downpatrick	Grammar (P)	13	95	5
Wellington College	Belfast	Grammar (P)	9	122	6
Sacred Heart Grammar School	Newry	Grammar (C)	13	121	6
Thornhill College	Londonderry	Grammar (C)	31	200	6
St Colman's College	Newry	Grammar (C)	10	135	6
Christian Brothers Grammar School	Newry	Grammar (C)	8	136	7

12

Parental choice and integrated education

Schools which improve their educational outcomes become more popular with parents. Using 2013 admissions data to post-primary schools[2] in which parents express their first preference when completing transfer forms, Borooah and Knox examined variations in popularity across schools. They examined variations in popularity across schools, as measured by the number of their first-preference applications, and asked, in particular, whether variations in popularity are associated with variations in schools' educational performance? In the analysis, educational performance is measured in two ways: (i) the proportion of pupils obtaining 5+ GCSE grades at A*-C and (ii) the proportion of pupils obtaining 5+ GCSE grades at A*-C, *including English and Mathematics*.

The results of our analysis (table 5 below) show that both types of GCSE performance significantly and positively affect the number of first preference applications expressed by parents for a school. Performance, including English and Mathematics, had a stronger effect than performance which does not include these subjects. In short, better performing schools influence parental choice for their children. This is hardly surprising but the strength of this relationship is compelling. The evidence shows the variation in parents' first preference choice for a post-primary school is explained by the school's education performance. Parents therefore 'vote with their feet' and choose schools largely based on educational performance rather than schools which might define their primary goal as reconciliation (integrated schools).

Table 5: Regression Estimates for Number of First Preference Applications to post primary schools

	Coefficient	Standard Error	T value	Prob>t
Proportion of 5+ A*-C including E&M	0.864	0.229	3.78	0.0
Proportion of 5+ A*-C	0.696	0.187	3.73	0.0
Equation Statistics				
	Number of Observations=200	R^2 adjusted=0.795	F(2,198)=389	Root MSE=52.9

---

[2] See Kathryn Torney 'The supply and demand for places: check out your local schools' *The Detail*, Issues 235, 1st July 2013

13

1121

Shared Education

The focus of shared education is delivering core curriculum activities where teachers and pupils work together across schools to achieve higher quality educational experiences. The delivery model involves 4 basic stages (figure 6):

FIGURE 6: SHARED EDUCATION MODEL
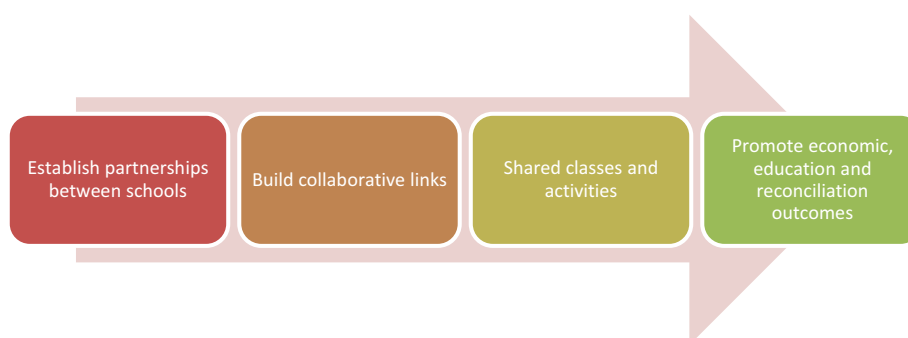
Shared education recognises that schools have interdependent relationships and promotes positive collaboration to support the common good. Ultimately it is about creating interdependencies between schools and making boundaries porous – it isn't about threatening anyone's identity or the creation of a Catholic/Protestant hybrid.

Much of the theoretical and research underpinnings for collaborative learning draw on the extensive literature on how collaboration and networking between schools in Great Britain can enhance school effectiveness and improvement. Work by Lindsay *et al* (2005), Chapman and Allen (2005), and Chapman and Hadfield (2010) examine the potential for stronger schools being matched with weaker schools to help improve their performance. Muijs *et al* (2010) argue that networking is differentially effective in meeting different educational goals and set out the circumstances under which it is more likely to enhance school effectiveness and improvement:

> Where improvements in pupil performance have been seen, this is often where more effective schools have paired with less effective schools to help them to improve, where leadership has been strong and supportive of networking, and where the number of schools involved has been limited. External support may also be helpful in cases where internal capacity or trust between schools may be lacking (Muijs et al: 2010: 24).

Chapman's research (2008; see also Chapman and Harris, 2004; and West, 2010) highlights key levers for improvement where networking takes place in a context of challenging circumstances which he argues should include: generating positive relationships; focusing

14

1122

on teaching and learning; understanding, leading and managing changes; committing to continuous professional development; building community; and, drawing on external support.

In their latest research on using collaboration and networking as a means of school improvement Chapman and Muijs (2013) conducted a large quantitative study (122 federations and 264 comparator schools) which examined the relationships between school federations and student outcomes. They developed a typology of federations (used to describe the nature of collaborative relationships and structural arrangements between two or more schools). One category was described as 'performance federations' consisting of two or more schools, some of which were low and others high performing schools. The study concluded:

> Federations can have a positive impact on student outcomes and federation impact is strongest where the aim of the federation is to raise educational standards by federating higher and lower attaining schools. Our study therefore primarily suggests that school improvement may result when a strong school works with a weaker school to improve the latter, and that it is this rather than a generic "collaboration effect" that may lead to improvement (Chapman and Muijs, 2013:35).

The shared education programme has so far primarily acted as a pilot for cross-community collaboration and trust building between schools. It has been able to take risks because it is externally funded, whereas the Department of Education would have been much more cautious fearing a potential sectarian backlash amongst some parents and pupils. Having demonstrated its potential for cross-community collaboration, there is now a real opportunity to adapt shared education as a mechanism for networking amongst schools in pursuit of raising education standards, tackling inequalities and contributing to a more inclusive society. The policy opportunity exists through two key commitments given by the Northern Ireland Executive in the *Programme for Government 2011-15* in which the Executive pledges to: ensure all children have the opportunity to participate in shared education programmes by 2015; and, substantially increase the number of schools sharing facilities by 2015 (Northern Ireland Executive, 2011).

In practical terms this approach offers a number of possibilities. The Education Minister's recent proposals for school improvement focus precisely on those issues which are seen to be important in the stronger/weaker collaborative approach, *inter alia*: enhanced teaching and learning; strong leadership and management of change; and, a commitment to continuous professional development. Maintaining a focus on raising educational outcomes, through 'partnerships for excellence', means that **all** schools, regardless of pupils' background have the opportunity to improve. There has been a review of the schools' funding formula in Northern Ireland which offered opportunities to incentivise collaboration (Salisbury, 2012). Although the review did not support this idea, the Ministerial advisory

15

1123

group on shared education did. Since schools which are currently competing for the same pupils are unlikely to want to collaborate (because they are from the same managing authority) then, by default, the collaborative partnerships will be cross-community. This, in turn, will have significant reconciliation benefits for students and society in the medium term. In short, shared education can complement the Minister's agenda on improving education standards, addressing inequalities and contribute towards a more inclusive society.

What are the educational benefits of sharing?

Education benefits:

We may analyse the benefits from sharing education in the context of individual returns to education defined as the wage premium of someone who holds that qualification over someone who does not, holding all the other educational achievements and the control variables constant. The research puts a monetary value on the lifetime earnings of those holding:

(a) 5+ GCSEs at A*- C
(b) 3+ A-levels but not proceeding to university
(c) University degree

Engagement in SEP will: increase the likelihood of getting good GCSEs; of going to University; and gaining fluency in foreign language – than would otherwise be the case.

We can estimate the education returns resulting from pupils participating in the Shared Education Programme. We investigate the education returns through four education partnerships in the SEP with the following lead schools: Lumen Christi Grammar School ([London]Derry); Belfast High School; Belfast Model School for Girls; and Shimna Integrated College (Newcastle).

Research evidence based on 4 selected primary and post-primary schools involved in the Shared Education Programme concluded that involvement in the initiative would <u>increase</u> the likelihood of: getting good GSCEs; gaining fluency in a foreign language; and going to University. Table below sets our estimates of the total economic benefits emanating from the four partnerships discussed above. These benefits are defined in terms of the increased earnings of pupils who have benefited from the shared education intervention. Aggregating these per-pupil benefits over the total number of pupil beneficiaries obtains the economic benefit of the four partnerships. Table 6 below suggests that the **total net benefit**, aggregated over the four partnerships, amounted to **over £23 million**. This figure was obtained as the annual increase in the working life earnings per pupil beneficiary of the SEP intervention × the number of beneficiary pupils × 40 years working life.

16

Table 6: Analysis of Benefits across the 4 SEP partnerships

	Primary	Post-Primary		Strand 1	Strand 2	
Benefit	Some students will get good GCSEs[*]	Likelihood of good GCSEs is increased	Some students will get good GCSEs[3]	Some students will go to university using 70 UCAS points	Some students will achieve 1-4 A*-C GCSE grades	Some students will gain fluency and seek work in mainland Europe
Pupils benefitting	20 out of 214	Likelihood for all 29 pupils raised from 60% to 80%	45 out of 214	6 out of 32	20 out of 60	23 out of 231
Amount of benefit per pupil over 40 year working-life	£277,393	£55,478 rise in expected earnings	£277,393	£174,440	£96,000	£138,760
Total Benefit	£5.5 million	£1.6 million	£12.5 million	£1.1 million	£1.9 million	£3.2 million
Total Project Cost over life of project	£1.8 million		£67,926	£126,479	£34,440	£277,144
Total Net Benefit over 40 year working-life	**£5.3 million**		**£12.4 million**	**£973,521**	**£1.87 million**	**£2.9 million**

Although the cost-benefit calculation on education is based on investing funds to secure an education return, the suggestion is that, should Shared Education become mainstreamed, it would draw on the existing DE budget and savings made elsewhere. In other words, there will be a net educational benefit which will result in higher education performance. The case studies illustrate that all types of schools can benefit – primary and post primary; secondary and grammar.

How is shared education being taken forward?

The new Shared Education Signature Project was launched in September 2014.The overall aims of the programme are to scale up the level of sharing drawing on existing evidence (see spectrum of sharing: figure 7, developed by Duffy, Baker and Stewart, QUB); mainstream financial support for any additional costs and improve the educational and reconciliation outcomes in school working collaboratively. This will be a four year project

---

[3] The assumption is that they will achieve 5+ GCSEs at A*-C after the SEP intervention, instead of 1-4 A*-C in its absence

17

1125

commencing with implementation in schools expected to commence in the 2014/15 academic year.

Agreement was reached with Ministers to establish a fund of up to £25m over the four year period, with contributions of up to £10m from the Atlantic Philanthropies, £10m from OFMDFM through central funds and up to £5m from the Department of Education. The availability of joint funding will be the incentive for schools to plan and have approved a shared education partnership at primary and post –primary level.

Atlantic funding in year 4 is subject to a commitment by DE (and/or Executive) to provide resources to mainstream shared education in the longer term.

Project objectives are:

- Improve education outcomes through schools working collaboratively
- Increase the number of schools participating in Shared Education
- Improve reconciliation outcomes through schools working collaboratively
- Increase the number of young people participating in Shared Education
- To work collaboratively to provide educators with professional development and develop their confidence and competence in using a range of learning strategies necessary for work in shared classes
- Enable schools to implement a progressive approach to shared education
- To ensure shared education becomes a core element of strategic planning within the Department of Education, Education and Library Boards/ Education & Skills Authority and schools.

Peace IV Funding – see details in Annex 2

18

19

	1. Schools Working In Isolation	2. Organic Partnerships	3. Regular and Sustained Shared Activity	4. Culture of Collegiality	5. Institutional Interdependence
Descriptor	The schools do not come together on anything other than a 'one off' basis	Co-agreed aim to bring multiple aspects of the schools together on different occasions across the academic year	Joint design & implementation of teacher development plan & curricular sharing plan across multiple academic years	All school planning, budgeting timetabling and teacher development is undertaken on a fully shared basis	Federated governance & management structure which determines how best to meet local educational needs applying a single resource across multiple outposts
Characteristics	N/A	• Schools perceive a long-term need for increasing collaboration; • Schools want to 'test out' potential partners; • Schools' curricular teaching plans remain entirely standalone.	• Peer BoGs agree a formal multi-annual plan for the partnership & notify parents; • Peer teachers come together each term for planning & training; • Each post-primary school is offering at least 2 GCSE equivalent subjects on a basis where half of the classes are physically shared; • Each primary school is delivering at least 12 physically shared curricular teaching sessions for all KS2 pupils each year (during school hours).	• All school activity has been actively scoped for sharing potential; • Joint school development plans are in place; • Recruitment and employee T&Cs are planned on a shared basis.	• Optimum sharing equilibrium has been achieved, maximising positive impacts within sustainable models/budgets; • New problems naturally approached from shared perspective.

DSC/AP Shared Education Funding

Figure 7: Spectrum of shared education
Source: Gavin Duffy, Mark Baker and Alistair Stewart (QUB)

ANNEX 1: table 7

Primary
Grant Maintained Integrated Primary Schools 2013/14[4]

School Name	Protestant	Catholic	Other religions or religion not known (includes Christians and non-Christians)	Total (reception to Year 7) (exclude nursery places)	Unfilled places Reception to Year 7 (excludes nursery places)	First preference applications 2013/14	Approved admissions number
Acorn Integrated Primary School	125	75	32	205	<5	38	29
Braidside Integrated Primary School	125	134	101	334	21	40	50
Bridge Integrated Primary School	167	184	59	410	8	72	58
Cedar Integrated Primary School	63	101	56	195	7	34	28
Corran Integrated Primary School	65	73	56	168	<5	24	29
Cranmore Integrated Primary School	81	66	52	199	15	25	29
Drumlins Integrated Primary School	50	52	58	160	0	25	21
Enniskillen Integrated Primary School	97	121	54	245	11	37	35
Hazelwood Primary School	126	221	118	413	8	71	58
Loughview Integrated Primary School	171	147	130	421	0	64	58
Maine Integrated Primary School	46	45	24	115	<5	19	19
Millennium Integrated Primary School	87	93	74	227	0	41	29
Millstrand Integrated Primary School	69	86	52	179	61	25	30
Oakgrove Integrated Primary School	111	213	129	401	12	60	56
Oakwood Integrated Primary School	65	87	52	204	6	36	29
Omagh Integrated Primary School	90	190	79	333	0	38	46
Phoenix Integrated Primary School	44	100	25	169	<5	34	25
Portadown Integrated Primary School	61	99	111	217	0	42	29
Roe Valley Integrated Primary School	34	105	29	168	<5	21	25
Rowandale Integrated Primary School	57	76	48	181	15	31	25
Saints & Scholars Int Primary School	60	84	75	192	<5	28	55
Spires Integrated Primary School	72	78	53	203	5	25	29
Windmill Integrated Primary School	64	104	65	206	11	25	30

[4] Shaded rows show schools where there are no unfilled school places.

20

ANNEX 1: table 8

Controlled Integrated Primary Schools 2013/14

School Name	Protestant	Catholic	Other religions or religion not known (includes Christians and non-Christians)	Total: reception to Year 7 (excludes nursery places)	Unfilled places: reception to Year 7 (excludes nursery places)	First preference applications 2013/14	Approved admissions number
All Childrens Integrated Primary School	53	120	41	214	0	34	29
Annsborough Primary School	16	33	6	55	<5	9	12
Ballycastle Integrated Primary School	72	81	31	158	8	24	23
Ballymoney Controlled Integrated Primary School	217	14	67	298	127	53	59
Bangor Central Integrated Primary School	337	91	176	604	19	81	87
Carhill Integrated Primary School	42	8	14	64	30	13	13
Carnlough Controlled Integrated Primary School	16	17	9	0	<5	5	9
Cliftonville Integrated Primary School	56	106	87	223	124	52	48
Crumlin Controlled Integrated Primary School	72	31	53	156	<5	34	41
Forge Integrated Primary School	78	91	123	292	0	60	36
Fort Hill Integrated Primary School	159	25	52	210	<5	28	30
Glencraig Integrated Primary School	115	57	49	221	39	45	30
Glengormley Integrated Primary School	69	121	103	293	158	46	60
Groarty Primary School	Less than 5	32	Less than 5	40	<5	3	9
Kilbroney Integrated Primary School	22	57	32	111	<5	23	20
Kircubbin Integrated Primary School	90	44	45	179	<5	26	23
Portaferry Integrated Primary School	17	33	13	63	<5	6	15
Rathenraw Integrated Primary School	26	37	11	74	168	9	30
Round Tower Integrated Primary School	80	87	101	268	<5	42	39

21

22

ANNEX 1: table 9

Post Primary

Grant Maintained Integrated Post-Primary Schools 2013/14

School Name	Protestant	Catholic	Other religions or religion not known (includes Christians and non-Christians)	Total	Unfilled places	First preference applications 2013/14	Approved admission numbers
Blackwater Integrated College	143	77	37	257	209	34	80
Drumragh Integrated College	194	378	100	672	0	117	96
Erne Integrated College	169	187	65	421	21	59	70
Hazelwood College	448	263	183	894	14	135	140
Integrated College Dungannon	140	313	86	539	0	49	90
Lagan College	548	447	265	1260	0	236	200
Malone Integrated College	315	216	125	656	189	45	130
New-Bridge Integrated College	235	268	66	569	0	98	100
North Coast Integrated College	280	100	87	467	55	41	80
Oakgrove Integrated College	244	590	37	871	4	122	130
Shimna Integrated College	186	279	81	546	0	92	80
Slemish College	338	279	180	797	0	161	120
Sperrin Integrated College	198	214	87	499	30	67	80
Strangford Integrated College	311	97	122	530	11	81	80
Ulidia Integrated College	299	202	70	571	0	98	80

Controlled Integrated post Primary Schools 2013/14

School Name	Protestant	Catholic	Other religions/religion not known (includes Christians and non-Christians)	Total	Unfilled places	First preference applications 2013/14	Approved admission numbers
Brownlow Integrated College	86	189	56	331	149	59	90
Crumlin Integrated College	53	45	43	141	270	11	75
Fort Hill College	640	85	165	890	16	115	160
Parkhall Integrated College	528	40	127	695	70	111	150
Priory College	374	57	69	500	6	51	85

Annex 1: Table 10
A selection of Voluntary Grammar Schools 2013/14 by religion

School Name	Protestant	Catholic	Other religions or religion not known	Total
Bangor Grammar School	550	34	274	858
Belfast High School	634	63	237	934
Belfast Royal Academy	767	347	295	1409
Campbell College	562	71	259	892
Coleraine Academical Institution	489	35	238	762
Dominican College (Portstewart)	146	280	86	512
Foyle College	596	153	105	854
Friends' School	685	121	182	988
Hunterhouse College	466	121	127	714
Methodist College	770	373	610	1753
Rainey Endowed School	453	200	66	719
Strathearn School	461	32	284	777
Sullivan Upper School	672	142	262	1076
Royal Belfast Academical Institution	462	90	483	1035
Victoria College	485	217	198	900

A selection of Controlled Grammar Schools 2013/14 by religion

School Name	Protestant	Catholic	Other religions or religion not known	Total
Antrim Grammar School	530	71	147	748
Bloomfield Collegiate	536	45	115	696
Carrickfergus Grammar School	566	28	206	800
Down High School	700	157	119	976
Glenlola Collegiate	745	50	270	1065
Grosvenor Grammar School	787	28	275	1090
Limavady Grammar School	528	304	67	899
Strabane Academy	366	239	34	639
Wellington College	534	48	222	804

23

Annex 2

Peace IV funding

The details of the PEACE IV Programme are currently under consultation but it will contribute towards the development of social and economic stability through the promotion of increased cohesion between communities. This is in line with relevant national policies including the 'Together: Building a United Community' (TBUC) strategy. In short, PEACE IV should complement the work of T:BUC.

Based on the results of a public consultation exercise and informed by the lessons of the Peace III Programme and additional research of the needs of programme area, the following strategic areas of investment have been prioritised for PEACE IV during the period 2014-2020:

(i)   **Shared Education:** The creation of a more cohesive society by increasing the level of sustained contact between school children from all backgrounds across the Programme area.

Actions to be supported:

- Joint development and planning of shared education initiatives;
- Joint delivery of the curriculum;
- Courses designed to increase good relations and respect for diversity among pupils, parents, and governors;
- Training and professional development courses designed to provide teachers with the necessary skills for curriculum planning and the delivery of lessons in relation to shared education.

(ii)   **Early Years & Young People:** The creation of a more cohesive community by equipping young people (through education, employment, training and initiatives that build respect) with a particular emphasis on NEETS from disadvantaged areas, with the tools to access opportunities in society.

Actions to be supported:

- Joint development and planning of youth work initiatives;
- Shared youth programmes focused on extracurricular sport, drama, cultural, language, entrepreneurial and volunteering activities;
- Cross-community and inter-cultural courses designed to increase good relations and respect for diversity among young people;
- Shared residential training programmes for young people, particularly those living adjacent to common interface areas;
- Peer mentoring initiatives;
- Youth leadership development initiatives;
- Cross-border professional development programmes to facilitate the transfer of knowledge, skills and experience;

24

1132

- Training courses, including European placements, for NEETs to improve their employability.

(iii) **Shared Spaces & Services:** The creation of a more cohesive society through an increased provision of shared spaces and services.

Actions to be supported:

- Capital developments to create shared spaces - both urban and rural;
- Programming initiatives designed to facilitate maximum and sustained levels of shared usage within these shared spaces;
- Public/community partnerships and facilitation for programme activities for shared space;
- Protocol development programmes to facilitate greater collaboration between people and places;
- Regeneration activities to ensure that public spaces are welcoming to all and respectful of cultural identity;
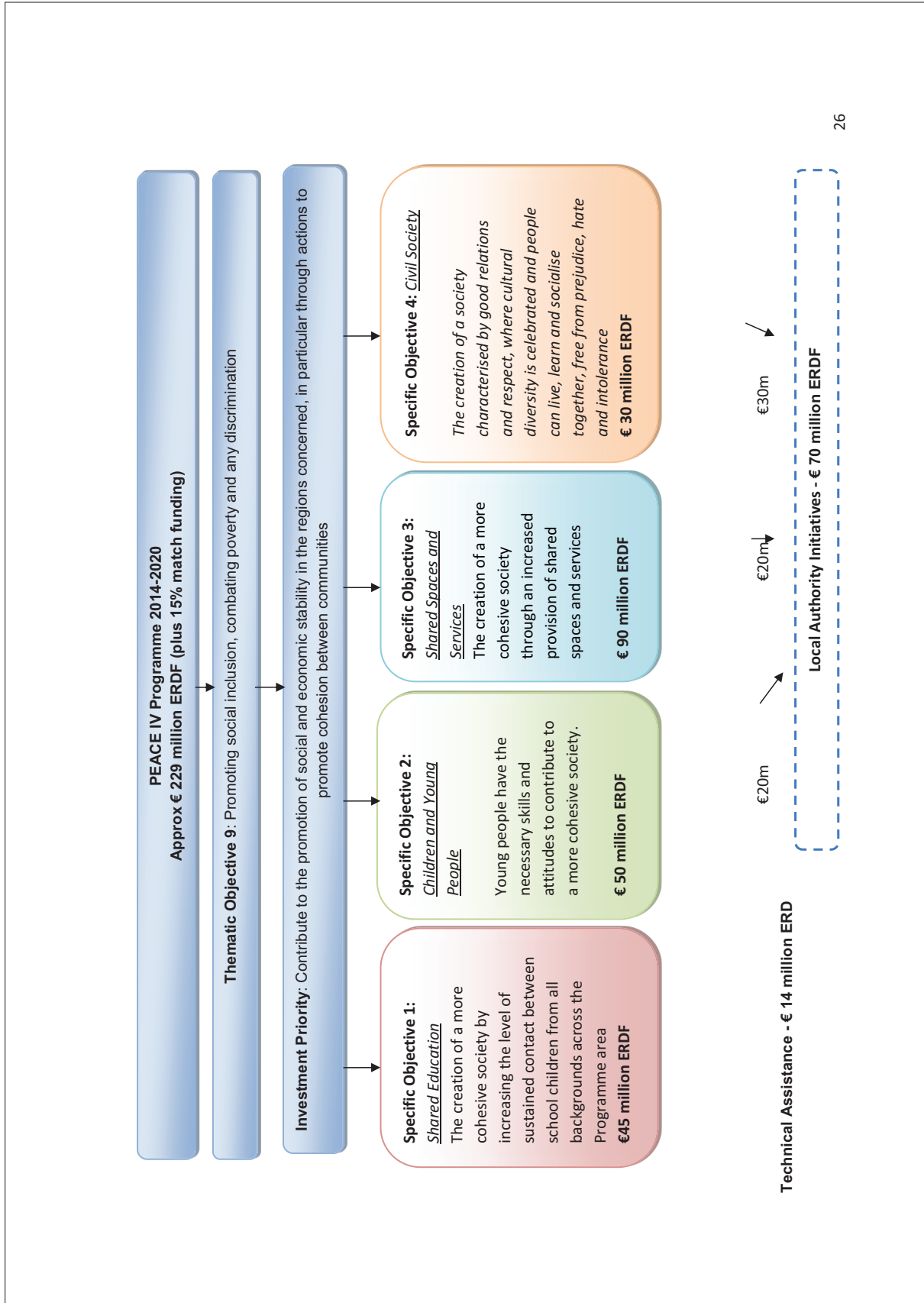- Shared services to address the trauma related needs of Victims and Survivors.

(iv) **Civil Society:** The creation of a society characterised by good relations and respect, where cultural diversity is celebrated and people can live, learn and socialise together, free from prejudice, hate and intolerance.

Actions to be supported:

- Structured programmes of activities involving groups from different backgrounds;
- Training and development programmes for inclusive civil leadership;
- Development of strong local partnerships aimed at addressing local problems of sectarianism and racism;
- Civil society development programmes focusing on areas such as: commemoration events; history; language; arts and culture; religion; leadership; community development; social enterprise; inclusion and equality; conflict resolution and mediation; entrepreneurial and economic activity; adult education; training and sport;
- Programmes aimed at engaging individuals and communities not previously involved in peacebuilding activities who wish to contribute to a shared society.

These 4 thematic areas have indicative allocated budgets as shown in the table below.

25

PEACE IV Programme 2014-2020
Approx € 229 million ERDF (plus 15% match funding)

Thematic Objective 9: Promoting social inclusion, combating poverty and any discrimination

Investment Priority: Contribute to the promotion of social and economic stability in the regions concerned, in particular through actions to promote cohesion between communities

Specific Objective 1:
Shared Education

The creation of a more cohesive society by increasing the level of sustained contact between school children from all backgrounds across the Programme area

€45 million ERDF

Specific Objective 2:
Children and Young People

Young people have the necessary skills and attitudes to contribute to a more cohesive society.

€ 50 million ERDF

Specific Objective 3:
Shared Spaces and Services
The creation of a more cohesive society through an increased provision of shared spaces and services

€ 90 million ERDF

Specific Objective 4: *Civil Society*

The creation of a society characterised by good relations and respect, where cultural diversity is celebrated and people can live, learn and socialise together, free from prejudice, hate and intolerance
€ 30 million ERDF

€20m

€20m

€30m

Local Authority Initiatives - € 70 million ERDF

Technical Assistance - € 14 million ERD

26

Knox and Borooah 2

Northern Ireland Assembly Education Committee Meeting
Fermanagh House: 18th June 2014
Briefing Paper: Shared Education Programme (SEP)

Introduction

The International Fund for Ireland (IFI) supported 19 projects within the Sharing in Education Programme (SiEP) which was evaluated by Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI). In addition to this programme, three other projects were funded by IFI and Atlantic Philanthropies. These 3 projects comprise the **Shared Education Programme (SEP)** which was implemented through the following organisations: Queen's University Belfast; the Fermanagh Trust; and, the North-Eastern Education and Library Board (Primary Integrating/ Enriching Education Project or PIEE).

This briefing paper relates specifically to the **3 projects under the Shared Education Programme**. The Education Committee will receive a separate briefing form ETI in relation to IFI's 19 projects in SiEP.

What is Shared Education?

Shared Education refers to schools from different sectors working together in a sustained process ranging from two or more schools making shared use of specialist facilities, through to coordinated timetabling, and pupils taking classes across a network of schools. Shared education is distinct from Integrated Education which involves the removal of sectoral differentiation in favour of unitary common schools. Shared Education has the potential to contribute to: school improvement and access to opportunity; encourage more effective use of resources; and promote social cohesion through the achievement of a shared and better society.[1]

How does it work?

The focus of Shared Education is delivering core curriculum activities where teachers and pupils work together across schools to achieve higher quality educational experiences. The delivery model involves 4 basic stages (see below).
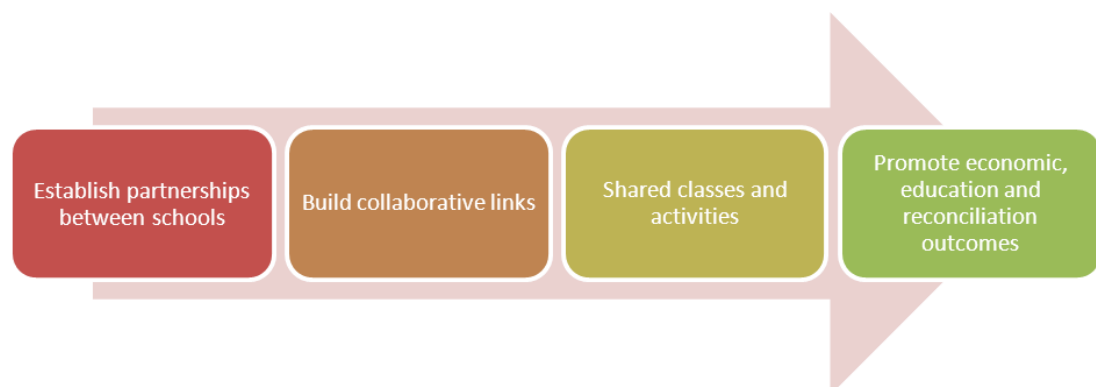
Shared education recognises that schools have interdependent relationships and promotes positive collaboration to support the common good. Ultimately it is about creating interdependencies between schools and making boundaries porous – it isn't about threatening anyone's identity or the creation of a Catholic/Protestant hybrid.

In practical terms, the implementation of this model is best exemplified through the Shared Education Programme which started in 2007, is funded jointly by the International Fund for Ireland and Atlantic Philanthropies, and is managed by Queen's University School of Education, the Fermanagh Trust and PIEE (Primary Integrating/Enriching Education Project in North Eastern Education and Library Board). During the 3 Years of the SEP, its activities have encompassed the following over the duration of the progarmme:

- 158 schools, which formed 54 school partnerships;

- Approximately 35,800 pupils; and,

- Approximately 28,300 hours of shared activities.

Three short examples illustrate shared education in practice:

(a) **Enhanced Qualifications Framework**: six schools in the Magherafelt area (two Maintained, two Controlled, one Integrated and one Special Education Needs (SEN) school) provide support for Year 13 pupils to prepare them for third level education by extending the post-16 curriculum provision. There are 29 different shared subjects/ courses offered to all Year 13 pupils on a weekly basis. Overall 390 pupils availed of the subjects on offer, resulting in 574 hours of shared classes being delivered. The delivery model implemented by the partnership involves the majority of subjects being taken as 'twilight' classes and the remaining subjects are embedded into the school timetable in a collaborative block.[2]

(b) **Rural Primary Schools**: Two small adjoining rural primary schools (Controlled and Maintained) in Tempo, County Fermanagh came together to enhance the educational experience for pupils and teachers through collaborating with one another rather than working separately. Every pupil within the two schools (n=176) was given the opportunity to participate in shared classes in drama, dance, art & design, health related fitness, and science. All the subjects contributed to the pupils' development within the NI Curriculum. A joint shared education policy has been developed between the schools, and teachers have also collaborated for staff development (e.g. Child Protection and First Aid training) and curriculum planning. Parental endorsement has been hugely positive in an area where the legacy of the conflict is significant.[3]

(c) **Shared Teacher Initiative**: Two primary schools (Controlled and Maintained) within the North Eastern Education and Library Board area whose future is at risk separately formed a education partnership and shared resources to deliver Key Stage 2 in areas such as literacy, personal development and mutual understanding (PDMU), music, art and sports, Such was the success of the collaboration that this partnership now employs a shared teacher appointed by a joint board of governors – an initiative which offers much wider potential for schools throughout Northern Ireland.[4]

What are the benefits of Shared Education?

There are at least three significant types of benefits arising from shared education: economic, education and reconciliation benefits.

Education benefits: research evidence based on 4 selected primary and post-primary schools involved in the Shared Education Programme concluded that involvement in the initiative would increase the likelihood of: getting good GSCEs; gaining fluency in a foreign language; and going to University. This translated into increased lifetime earnings for participants in study. For an investment of £2m across the four projects, the educational benefits for children involved in the 4 projects were calculated at £25m. In short, the **total net benefits** across 4 primary and post-primary schools involved in shared education amounted to £23m.[5]

Reconciliation benefits: There is a considerable body of research evidence to show the reconciliation benefits of sustained contact across school sectors in Northern Ireland.

In one study, for example, researchers examined social identity and intergroup attitudes amongst children attending a state controlled Protestant school and how they dealt with issues of diversity and difference. The findings suggest that separate schooling is more likely to contribute to 'own' group bias, stereotyping and prejudice.[6] Researchers have also considered the impact of pupils' participation in the Shared Education Programme on cross-group friendships and intergroup anxiety. The study confirms the value of contact as a mechanism for promoting more harmonious relationships that can help promote social cohesion in a society that remains deeply divided.[7]

Economic benefits: Some schools which are 'stressed' under three of the six criteria (education performance, school enrolments, and financial viability) from the Department of Education's Sustainable Schools Policy can offer budgetary savings through shared education 'solutions'. School closures achieve limited savings to the Department of Education because the Age Weighted Pupil Unit (AWPU) is a significant element of the school funding allocation (80%) which follows the pupil when his/her school closes. One study puts the savings to the Department of Education at 3.1% of their budget were they to close all primary and post-primary schools below the 'sustainable schools' enrolment thresholds. At the level of the school, shared teachers, classes and educational resources will provide schools with economies of scale.[8]

The reconciliation benefits described above have been costed for the Shared Education Programme. The study puts a monetary value on the reduction of sectarian hostility and suspicion towards the 'other' community using survey data on attitudinal and behaviour changes in SEP participants. In societal terms this would lead to: reduced police costs; increased foreign investment; and a reduction in the number of sectarian incidents. Savings are estimated at £80m per year.[9] The reconciliation benefits of shared education can therefore contribute directly to the Government's commitment to 'building a united community' (T:BUC).

Figure 1: Tempo Controlled Primary School

Sculpture: 'From a distance we look the same, up close we are different'

Social Justice and Education

Beyond the direct and indirect education, economic and reconciliation benefits outlined above, the current education system is socially unjust. We know from research that post-primary pupils from deprived backgrounds face considerable difficulty accessing grammar

schools.[10] There is a much greater problem for pupils accessing Protestant than Catholic grammar schools.[11] We also know that children in receipt of free school meals and those with special educational needs are disproportionately under-represented among grammar schools. The education performance of Maintained secondary and grammar schools is significantly better than their Controlled counterparts. Shared education offers a real opportunity to improve the education of those pupils from the Controlled sector and, in so doing, contribute to the wider societal reconciliation benefits associated with cross sectoral working.

Mainstreaming Shared Education

Mainstreaming shared education fits in with a number of the Department of Education's priorities. First, within DE's strategic objectives, the economics research above offers proposals which begin to 'close the performance gap and increase access and equity'. Second, within the Programme for Government (PfG) commitments, improving education performance at GCSE level with specific reference to those from disadvantaged backgrounds has been highlighted as a priority. In addition, there are 3 explicit commitments in the PfG to shared education (Lisanelly; all children should have the opportunity to participate in shared education by 2015; and to substantially increase the number of schools sharing facilities by 2015). Third, the Department's Community Relations, Equality and Diversity in Education (CRED) policy document makes a clear commitment to sharing and collaboration across and between all educational settings on a cross-community basis. Fourth, shared education is an integral part of the devolved government's commitments in Together Building a United Community (T:BUC) policy document.

Key features of shared education

- Offers local solutions to cross-sectoral working (as opposed to a 'one size fits all' area planning approach).

- Works best where schools are in close proximity to avoid transportation costs of sharing.

- Basis of sharing is sustained contact in the delivery of core curriculum activities.

- Clear education, economic, reconciliation and social justice effects.

- Maintains the identity of communities, threatening no-one's ethos.

Evidence informed policy making

So how might the above research inform education policy? There is an opportunity in the current review of the schools estate through the viability audits of primary and post primary schools and the associated area planning process to embed shared education. The following policy recommendations are set out for consideration:

1. Cross-sectoral options should be explored as the first step in the area planning process. Only after shared solutions have been thoroughly examined should area plans move to intra-sectoral proposals, giving reasons why shared solutions will not work.

2. The proposed outcomes of the area planning process should be the subject of an open and transparent public consultation which allows for a breadth of feedback. In addition, only three of six criteria for area planning have been included in the audit process. The remaining three criteria: strong leadership, accessibility, strong links with the community should feature in the final outcomes of the area planning process.

3. The common funding formula for schools is currently under review. The new formula should incentivise sharing as an integral part of the way schools are funded.

4. Any new capital provision or significant refurbishments should be 'share-proofed'. In other words, no new schools should be built without incorporating key principles of shared education (shared budgets, teachers, administrative and learning resources).

5. Shared education should feature as a key component in the implementation of T:BUC (over and above the commitment to 10 shared campuses). T:BUC notes: 'we believe that creating a full shared education system is a crucial part of breaking the cycle of inter-generational under-achievement, unemployment, and sectarianism, and improving good relations amongst young people'[12]

6. There pre-existing working models of shared education funded by external providers (Atlantic Philanthropies and International Fund for Ireland) need to feature prominently in the new Delivering Social Change Shared Education Signature Project (jointly funded by OFMDFM, DE and Atlantic Philanthropies). There is a risk that DE will see this initiative as little more than CRED-plus.

7. Area Learning Communities [ALCs] have been supported as a mechanism through which schools can broaden the range of curricular pathways for pupils in the run-up to implementing the entitlement framework which becomes an obligation for schools by 2014-15. In addition, it is claimed that ALCs are putting in place shared education. There is no evidence to support this assertion. DE claims that they do not gather information on the extent of sharing in the ALCs, their impact on educational outcomes, and the value for money of these collaborative arrangements.

Colin Knox and Vani Borooah
University of Ulster
June 2014

cg.knox@ulster.ac.uk
vk.borooah@ulster.ac.uk

References

1   Gallagher, T., Stewart, A., Walker, R., Baker, M. and Lockhart, J. (2010) 'Sharing education through schools working together' Shared Space, Issue No. 10: 65-74. Belfast: Community Relations Council.
     Duffy, G. and Gallagher, T. (2012) Sustaining Cross-Sector Collaboration An examination of schools involved in the first cohort of the Sharing Education Programme. Belfast: Queen's University.

2   For additional information see: http://www.schoolsworkingtogether.com/

3   For additional information see: http://www.fermanaghtrust.org/cms/publish/sharededucation/index.shtml

4   For additional information see: http://www.neelb.org.uk/schools/piee/

5   Borooah, V. and Knox, C. (2013) 'The Contribution of Shared Education to Catholic-Protestant reconciliation in Northern Ireland: a third way?' British Educational Research Journal, Vol. 39 (5), pp. 925-946.

6   Hughes, J. (2011) 'Are Separate Schools divisive? A Case Study from Northern Ireland' British Educational Research Journal 37(5) 829-850.

7   Hughes, J., Lolliot, S., Hewstone, M., Schmid, K. and Carlisle, K. (2012) Sharing Classes between Separate Schools: a mechanism for improving inter-group relations in Northern Ireland? Policy Futures in Education 10(5).

8   Borooah, V. and Knox, C. (2012) The Economics of School Closures in Northern Ireland. University of Ulster.

9   Borooah, V. and Knox, C. (2011) The Economics of the Shared Education Programme. University of Ulster

10   Borooah, V. and Knox, C. (2014) Access and Performance Inequalities: post primary education in Northern Ireland' Journal of Poverty and Social Justice http://dx.doi.org/10.1332/175982714X14011942364092

11   Educational Disadvantage and the Protestant Working Class: A Call to Action (2011) Purvis Report.

12   OFMDFM: Together: Building A United Community, 2013, section 2.53.

Labour Party Northern Ireland

Labour

The Labour Party in Northern Ireland

Submission of the Northern Ireland Constituency of the Labour Party To the Education Committee of the Northern Ireland Assembly's Inquiry on Integrated Education and Shared Education

"Children are the living messages we send to a time we will not see"

(Postman, 1982).

The Party would like to put forward the following as its contribution to the inquiry on Integrated and Shared Education

"We live in a world that is prone to many expressions of prejudice, in which religious attitudes still play a disturbingly significant part. Sometimes these attitudes are deliberate and malicious; but perhaps more often they are due to a straightforward lack of awareness and understanding – the ignorance that creates the vacuums into which the prejudices may rush! Northern Ireland is just one of the places where the negative impulses of prejudice have damaged people's humanity. "

If racial, cultural or religious prejudice is so easily learned then surely people can also learn skills in tolerance and respect for others. It may not be so easy, but it is surely important in order to counter those learned responses which all too quickly diminish, demonise and dehumanise others. This is surely a key value in education – to enhance people's dignity and sense of humanity and their respect for others. It is clearly expressed in Article 29 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child:

"the education of the child shall be directed to … the preparation of the child for responsible life in a free society, in the spirit of understanding, peace, tolerance, equality of sexes, and friendship among all peoples, ethnic, national and religious groups and persons of indigenous origin".

(Richardson, N, 2008)

Northern Ireland has moved massively forward in the years since the signing of the Belfast agreement in 1998. However, there is still a long way to go before we can claim to be a normal, democratic society. There are huge divisions that still exist in our society and the kind of educational system that exists perpetuates those divisions. However, education has a powerful role in transforming societies and not least those which are emerging from years of conflict. However, we have to ask of all our sectors of education - Are we truly focussed on fulfilling the needs and aspirations of our young people for the next 20 or 30 years or are we tinkering at the edges of what is for many students a failing system? Are our schools providing the vital foundations to prepare their pupils for living in the future or are we more concerned with defending our corner?

The Party recognises the work that the Shared Education Programme, and other similar programmes have done in schools and it recognises that for a number of schools this may be the only way forward at this stage in their development. However, using the definition given for shared education as *"Shared Education is broadly defined as any collaborative activity within or between schools or other educational institutions that can: contribute towards school*

improvement, provide access to opportunity, encourage more effective use of resources, and promote social cohesion" means that it is a "weak" form of programme compared to the "strong" form for 'Integrated Education'. This also applies to the "Shared Campus" concept. Supporters of the shared campus model argue that *"they increase the number of academic offerings, develop appropriate school sizes and more effectively use the available school buildings."* In both schemes educational outcomes are reported as positive though are often ill-defined and difficult to quantify, and have so far only affected a very small numbers of pupils. In Northern Ireland terms they would be classified as "integration light" compared to an integrated school whose ethos and curriculum is based on there being a united community with peace and reconciliation at its core in an all-inclusive and mutually respectful shared space and with educational outcomes that, given the selective nature of the post-11 system, are very good.

Both of the 'weak' schemes depend very much on the goodwill of all concerned, the governance of the scheme, and its funding. Can they survive in the long-term? The learning community partnerships, as presently constituted, are generally not working to their full potential and as funding is being reduced for their operation, it will be interesting to see how long they can last.

Our present system of provision of education is very costly because of the nature of the provision. However, the present system of Area Based Planning is flawed in that its decisions were being mainly made on a sectoral basis and without the full input from all sectors. So when proposals for a particular area are being set out, communities should always be given the option to consider cross-sector amalgamations and integration as a possibility.

The party would like to make the following recommendations:-

(1)   That the Northern Ireland Executive accept its responsibility "to facilitate and encourage 'Integrated Education …. in the process of reconciliation and the creation of a culture of tolerance at every level of society".

(2)   That the Department of Education be held accountable for the implementation of its statutory duty under Article 64 of the 1989 Education Reform (NI) Order ' to encourage and facilitate integrated education'.

(3)   That all pre-school and nursery education be designated as integrated and that in future planning for such provision that it be placed to enable children from all communities to access it.

(4)   That targets be set, in the area-planning process for both primary and post-primary schools such that at least one quarter be integrated schools.

(5)   At the post-16 stage there should be moves towards the provision of sixth-form colleges and/or the development of post-16 centres linked to FE Colleges. Most non-grammar schools and some grammar schools offer very restricted curricular packages at this level and most are uneconomic. Collaboration can work in some cases where the schools/FE are very close together, eg Limavady, but generally the costs of collaboration are quite significant and are based on the needs of the institutions rather than the students. An integrated regional approach to the provision of post-16 education based firmly on the needs of students rather than the individual institution is required.

(6)   That for "Shared Education" the Education Minister should bring forward, at the earliest possible opportunity, a statutory definition of shared education which makes explicit that it must involve meaningful cross-community interaction by pupils on a sustained basis.

(a)   Using this definition, the Department of Education must make it a statutory obligation for schools to ensure that all their pupils are provided with the opportunity to participate in shared education on a regular basis.

(b) The Department must also make available sufficient funding to ensure that all schools can ensure that their pupils have the opportunity to participate in meaningful cross-community shared education and CRED programmes on a regular basis.

(c) The Department must institute a robust system of monitoring which enables it to evaluate, on a regular basis, whether and how each individual school is implementing shared education and CRED, including the extent and quality of cross-community engagement which is offered by each school.

(7) That the provision of teacher training be rationalised as a matter of urgency. There are presently too many providers and professionally it does not seem sensible to have, for the needs of the service, training at 3 different institutions. The establishment of an inclusive centre of excellence to train our young teachers would help to build a united and prosperous community.

(8) That the new single authority, when undertaking planning provision on an area basis, should not only involve all the school providers on an equal basis, but should ensure that there is proper consultation with parents and students.

The Party is very willing to amplify its comments before the Select Committee.

Lagan College

Education Committee – Shared Education Response

This response is submitted on behalf of Lagan College. Lagan College is Northern Ireland's first integrated school. Lagan College is integrated, inclusive, co-educational, all ability and an 11-18 school.

Northern Ireland currently has 62 integrated schools whose agreed mission is to educate all children together irrespective of their faith background or none, ethnicity, nationality, ability or culture.

Lagan College was founded in 1981 by a small but committed group of parents who believed in a new integrated way of educating their children together - such was their conviction and passion that some even financed the project to enable the first integrated post primary school to open against a back drop of intense trouble and conflict.

Since then, the school has flourished. Our parents/ guardians believe that their children deserve the right to attend a good school, achieve their best, enjoy and have fun growing up and developing into young men and women. That belief system is also rooted in the knowledge that sending their children to an integrated school will more fully prepare them to live, travel and work anywhere in the world. Their belief is that university, further education or the workplace will not be the first time that their children have spent any meaningful time relating to, respecting and befriending children from different family backgrounds other than their own.

Within an integrated setting children learn, grow, develop, mature, laugh and cry together. Everything is shared over a meaningful period of time. Their entire educational experience is shared - not simply a part of it or for a part of the time. The whole time the child experiences being an important and valued part of an integrated school community that welcomes all children, celebrates diversity, addresses and discusses controversial issues and is committed to enabling children to grow and learn in harmony with each other.

We believe that integration should be the normal way of educating children in our society in order to build a meaningful and lasting peace.

Lagan College is a place where children and staff can confidently and proudly state their nationality, their faith tradition other or none and their cultural background, all the while, still showing respect, understanding and kindness towards each other.

As one school community, we do everything together, be that Remembrance Day, Ash Wednesday, celebrating Chinese New Year, enjoying a Ceili night, learning about the Irish and English languages or playing Gaelic or Rugby. We are committed to breaking down the walls, the divides, the pigeon holing the compartmentalising, the labelling, the second guessing and the assumption making that goes on in our society.

"Division", "conflict", "violence", "them and us" and "segregation" must be words from our past not our present or our future. We need clear leadership to make decisions that challenge the status quo and legacy of the past. We need political leaders who know in their hearts and minds what is right, just and fair for all children.

We ask the question, "What is preventing the Government from doing more to support and further integrated education in 2014?". It has been 16 years since the Good Friday Agreement. How do we make the peace process a reality on a day to day basis? In Lagan College we believe that educating children together is one step towards that goal.

World leaders, academics and visitors both locally and globally have visited Lagan College and held integrated education as exemplary practice for building peace. Many countries and academics have used Lagan College and integrated education as a model for their own societies in dealing with conflict. Years of research has demonstrated that integrated education is successful. We now have 33 years of integrated schooling at Lagan College and we know it makes a difference.

Shared education has its merits. Any sharing by children is a positive but in our opinion, it is not enough. We believe that all parents and children should have a right to integrated and inclusive education, if that is their choice and at present that is not possible for all families.

Lagan College students have enjoyed and benefitted from shared learning experiences through CRED, the Area Learning Community School events and shared learning courses. In recent years our students have also enjoyed and benefitted from the excellent Entwined Histories School Programme marking the centenary of anniversaries.

However, ask any child who has attended Lagan College or indeed speak to any adult associated to the school, be they a staff member or a parent/guardian and they will tell you that these shared opportunities have merit but do not go far enough in providing a meaningful opportunity or a long term solution for our children to get to know and understand one another better. We believe that integrated education will further the peace process more so than shared education.

Controlled, integrated or maintained schools, there is a place for all in society at present. Lagan College does not wish to be hypocritical or misquoted. Our school is founded on the premise of equality and everyone deserves the right to have their own opinion and their choice of education.

This is Lagan College's response to the issue of shared education. We believe that shared education is not an adequate step forward for children. If anything, some of what it offers, feels akin to the EMU programmes of the 1990s.

We are happy to speak to the academics and Government officials going forward to be of help in this matter. We welcome the debate and an opportunity to contribute to it.

We invite the Education Committee to visit Lagan College and speak to the important people who matter the most, namely the young people who will hopefully live, work and enjoy a more peaceful lifestyle than their parents and grandparents have in the past.

Lagan College
24 October 2014

Limavady Grammar School

LIMAVADY GRAMMAR SCHOOL

3 Ballyquin Road, Limavady,
Co Londonderry, BT49 9ET

Telephone (028) 7776 0950
Fax (028) 7776 5183

Email office@lgs.limavady.ni.sch.uk
Website www.limavadygrammar.org.uk

PRINCIPAL

Mr R Wilson BSc (Hons), MSc. Grad Cert Ed. PQH (NI)

09 October 2014

Mr P McCallion
Clerk to the Committee
Committee for Education
Room 375, Parliament Buildings
Ballymiscaw
Stormont
Belfast
BT4 3XX

Dear Mr McCallion

Shared and Integrated Education Inquiry

As a school my Board of Governors welcomes the concept of pupils, of all cultural and religious backgrounds, being educated and working together.

Limavady Grammar School is a Controlled Grammar School under the auspices of Western Education and Library Board. The Board of Governors is made up of DE Representatives, WELB Representatives, Parent Representatives and Teacher Representatives. As with all other Controlled Grammar Schools, there is no church representation on the Board and consequently the school is not aligned with any Transferor group.

The school has a long history of providing 'integrated' education. Indeed the demographic make-up of the school, pupils and staff, would suggest that it is probably one of the most integrated schools in Northern Ireland. It has a greater 'mix' than many schools which bear the label 'integrated'. Whilst encouraging parents to take the main lead in religious upbringing of their children, the school upholds a strong Christian ethos and facilitate pupils, whose parents request, to attend religious services during the school day on Days of Holy Obligation.

The natural process of integration as has developed in Limavady Grammar School, meeting the needs of the whole community, is undoubtedly the way forward. Initiatives like Shared Education Campuses, which attract huge financial investment, have the potential to maintain community divisions with only a small number of pupils benefiting from the elements of sharing. In the meantime schools like Limavady Grammar School will not benefit financially for the long established work that is undertaken to educate together pupils from all faiths and none.

In relation of your committee's terms of reference, I would suggest that existing models of good practice, such as Limavady Grammar School should, be given due consideration and priority.

Yours sincerely

PP

R Wilson
Principal

Learning, Caring and Preparing for Life

Lismore Comprehensive School

Lismore Comprehensive School

Drumgask, Craigavon, Co. Armagh BT65 5DU
Tel: (028) 38314950 Fax: (028) 38314966
Email: info@lismorecomp.craigavon.ni.sch.uk

Principal: Mrs Fiona Kane, BA (Hons), PGCE, Dip.Ed, PQH (NI)

Mr Peter McCallion
Clerk to the Committee
Committee for Education
Room 375, Parliament Buildings
Ballymiscaw
Stormont
Belfast BT4 3XX   24th October 2014

Dear Mr McCallion

Please find below the response to your inquiry on Shared and Integrated Education on behalf of Lismore Comprehensive School.

- *Review the nature and definition of Shared Education and Integrated Education as it applies across all educational phases – including consideration of the need for a formal statutory definition and an obligation in statute to facilitate and encourage Shared Education*;

  - In the interests of clarity, we think there needs to be clearly defined descriptors of both Shared and Integrated Education as we believe these educational terms have increasingly become more coupled together despite being, in our opinion very different educational concepts and practices. We would therefore recommend clearer definition and description and would also welcome an obligation in statute to facilitate and encourage Shared Education.

  - Shared Education may be defined as schools and other educational establishments working in partnership to meet the needs of learners. It helps schools to manage their budget more effectively by sharing resources across schools; meet the requirements of the Entitlement Framework; protect and promote minority subjects and curriculum areas and promote professional dialogue between schools across different sectors and school types.

  - Integrated Education may be defined as a type of school outside the Maintained, Controlled and Irish Medium sectors. As defined by NICIE, "Integrated Education brings children and staff from Catholic and Protestant traditions, as well as those of other faiths, or none, together in one school." In Lismore, we are very proud of our Catholic ethos which is an open welcoming ethos developed in school to children of all faiths. We are concerned at a perceived political agenda which may suggest that Integrated Education is 'better than' other educational types or a 'solution to' the historic political and religious divisions in Northern Ireland. We believe that parental choice must continue to be a protected freedom and in that context, we believe in the right of faith-based schools to exist and co-exist with other sectors.

- *Identify the key barriers and enablers for Shared Education and Integrated Education*;

  - **Barriers and enablers: Shared Education**

    Physical distance between school campuses, individual school self-interest and timetabling constraints can create potential barriers to the facilitation of Shared Education. However, many schools, including Lismore Comprehensive have worked with other schools and educational providers to overcome these barriers. With the establishment and development of Area Learning Communities with access to additional funding shared across the ALC, Shared Education is now a positive reality in many geographical areas with schools sharing their resources effectively to meet the needs of learners in their communities. Shared Education may also have a positive effect on community relations. Much work still needs to be done in some areas between the grammar sector sharing with their non-selective neighbouring schools were sharing has not yet been established or developed.

  - **Barriers and enablers: Integrated Education**

    Decreasing demand for school places, particularly in post primary education may be a barrier to developing integrated education further. We believe that without integrated housing, integrated education may well be a non-starter. Pupil outcomes in public examinations in some integrated schools are well below the NI average and therefore parent/pupil confidence in this system of education could also be perceived as a barrier. We believe that there exists positive discrimination for Integrated Education from a number of external and additional funding bodies that schools may access. Being able to demonstrate that planned work will involve working in or with integrated education providers certainly is a criteria box ticking exercise to enable successful draw down of some funding. As this appears to be the case, we believe it is an unfair practice to positively discriminate in favour of this sector over another sector to support a somewhat hidden agenda – this practice certainly does not appear to support a wider educational agenda.

- *Identify and analyse alternative approaches and models of good practice in other jurisdictions in terms of policy interventions and programmes*;

  - First of all, the uncoupling of Shared and Integrated Education as concepts needs to take place soon and each definition and concept developed separately. Many schools do not have any issues in theory as to benefits and practise of Shared Education – it makes sense economically and helps protect many areas of a wider curriculum menu and indeed delivery. Secondly, as educationalists, we would be very interested in any research that identifies good practice in Integrated Education as an educational approach to learning, particularly research which may suggest or conclude that Integrated Education as an ethos, pedagogy and identity, outperforms other educational approaches including that of a Catholic Maintained School.

- *Consider what priorities and actions need to be taken to improve sharing and integration – including the effectiveness of the relevant parts of the CRED policy; the need to engage more effectively with parents/carers; and the role of Special Schools*;

Recommended actions to be taken:

- The voice of parents, primary school partners, CCMS, ELBs, Youth Service and Churches should be part of this consultative process.

- Concepts should be more clearly defined in laymen's terms: 'Shared' and 'Integrated'.

- The political agenda that appears to be promoting and/or 'pushing' integrated education in Northern Ireland, needs to be defined and made open and transparent for educationalists and the wider electorate. We believe if this perceived political agenda is indeed the reality, then this manifesto should be supported by independent worldwide academic and educational research.

Should you wish for further clarity or discussion on any of these points noted above, please do not hesitate to contact me. As communicated previously, we are also happy to facilitate discussion with our Student Council should you wish to garner Pupil opinion.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Fiona Kane
Principal

Loughview Integrated Primary and Nursery School

Learning and growing together

October 20, 2014

Dear Mr McCallion

Thank you for this opportunity to provide a response to the Education Committee on the debate around the future in terms of shared/integrated education.

The request by the committee for information in regard to this issue is timely as there seems to be a growing misconception that integrated and shared education are one and the same thing and have the same potential benefits. They are not the same and it is my view that Shared Education as currently envisioned will fall far short of what integrated schooling regularly achieves.

Under the terms of the Good Friday Agreement our local administration is obliged to facilitate the growth of integrated/shared education, the inference being that it can help heal the breaches in what is still a deeply divided society and so help us build a shared future. The work of the integrated schools that have emerged over the last 30 years clearly evidences the vital contribution that schools can make to peace building and has had an influential 'ripple out' effect within education and wider society to the extent that most people now accept that greater sharing is a necessary and good thing. The challenge however is how to take this forward in a way that has a lasting and meaningful impact. Hence the debate on shared/integrated education!

For those of us who work within the integrated sector it seems that the 'Shared Education' model which enables schools to share sites, facilities and promotes some limited pupil and teacher contact is now regarded by DE as its preferred strategy. This is in contrast to the integrated model whereby children and staff from the two main traditions and from none are fully immersed together in a single school community. Indeed the DE's ambivalence to 'Integrated Education' can be evidenced by the fact that it required a recent judicial review (Drumragh IC) to remind it of its statutory obligation to facilitate integrated schools.

Why this strategy? Why is Shared Education being promoted as the way forward in terms of a more integrated model of schooling? I wish the answer was grounded in international research and case studies in N. Ireland which made a compelling case. Sadly it appears not to be and the reality may simply be political pragmatism.

Put simply 'Shared Education' is less threatening to the various vested interests in our education system and wider society including political parties, the Catholic Church, the Transferors lobby etc. It's the deal they can all do without really giving up anything that really matters to them.

While there may be those who believe that it can make a difference, promoting 'Shared Education' may simply create the illusion that our politicians and the educational establishment are doing their bit to promote a 'shared future', when in reality they are falling far short of what really needs to be done.

As a concept 'Shared Education' sounds fine but what does it mean in practice? The shared campus concept seems to represent the extent of the DE's ambitions in terms of shared education. My worry is that it will only serve to illustrate how different school communities can co-exist in some benign form of educational apartheid where separate uniforms, timetables and doors regulate the amount and quality of contact between the young people concerned. While for some this might be a step forward in terms of what has gone before, is it good enough?

By comparison within my own integrated school, which is diverse and inclusive in terms of race, religion, social class and ability, it is the sharing of a uniform and the time spent together in class, in the playground, on the sports-field or over lunch that helps our children grow their understanding and acceptance of one another. Moreover it is this regular and meaningful sharing which helps us grow a sense of common identity and community, whilst acknowledging the diversity intrinsic to our school.

To put my comments into context I should add that before working in the integrated sector I spent 14 years in the controlled sector including several years as a VP in a school on a loyalist housing estate where sectarian and racist attitudes were just a fact of life. While working in the controlled sector I was involved in a succession of EMU/CRED (community relations) projects between controlled and maintained schools and can report that although they did no harm that they achieved little of lasting value.

The final point worth making is an economic one. N. Ireland has an education system it can't really afford. A segregated school system has meant too many schools and an unnecessary replication of services, something clearly evidenced in the Common Funding Review led by Robert Salisbury several years ago. Area Based Planning raised the hope that a clear sighted economic appraisal would acknowledge the unsustainable cost of continued segregation and open minds to the difficult decisions that lay ahead i.e. closing non-viable schools and promoting real sharing.

Instead what initially emerged were sectoral solutions for rationalisation led by CCMS and the ELBs. Subsequently 'Shared Education' has emerged as a possible solution in some instances, but there is a lack of clarity around what is shared, with whom and to what degree. It would seem prudent that before more public money is spent on 'Shared Education' we have some agreed definition of what it is, how best it might work and what its potential is to help us build a shared future.

If we are serious about building more cohesive communities and a genuinely shared future, 'Shared Education' needs to aspire eventually to be what the best integrated educated schools already are. It is the best way forward and existing models of integrated schooling, together with the wealth of leading edge experience within our schools in how to successfully integrate school communities (children, teachers and parents) are there to be built upon. In addition to this, in other countries, including mainland UK, there are alternative models of effective shared/shared education that could be considered. A good example is the Emmaus School in Liverpool, a joint faith primary school which allows for representation on the school Board for both Catholic and Anglican clergy.

I am willing to concede that there will be no easy 'one size fits all' solution in terms of integrated education but promoting the tokenism and limited ambition of 'Shared Education' seems like a cop out.

In conclusion the narrative of many integrated schools is of how ordinary people desiring change for the better, for their children and their communities came together and worked sometimes against the odds to build a better future. It takes courage, commitment and a belief that real change is possible. The challenge for politicians and DE is to do the same!

Yours sincerely

M McKnight Principal

TSO
information & publishing solutions

ISBN 978-0-339-60591-6

9 780339 605916